

Gal 10 0 f
S E R M O N S

ON SEVERAL

Important Subjects

OF

RELIGION and MORALITY.

To Which are added

T W O T R A C T S :

- I. A SUMMARY VIEW of the Doctrine of JUSTIFICATION :
II. An ENQUIRY concerning the ANTIQUITY of the PRACTICE of INFANT-COMMUNION, as founded on the Notion of its STRICT NECESSITY,

In TWO VOLUMES,

By DANIEL WATERLAND, D. D.

Late ARCH-DEACON of *Middlesex*, MASTER of *Magdalen-College* in *Cambridge*, &c. and CHAPLAIN in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

Publiſh'd from His Original MSS.

With a PREFACE, by JOSEPH CLARKE, M. A.

Fellow of Magdalen-College in CAMBRIDGE.

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2 E R M O N S

Important

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourses require no other Recommendation than what the *Title-Page* will give them, by acquainting the World, that they are the Works of the late Doctor DANIEL WATERLAND; a Person, whose *Learning* and *Judgment* were equal'd by Nothing, but His *Candour* and *Humility*—I shall not attempt to draw a Character, which, if there were need of any, would require, and hath accordingly had, a more able Hand to do Justice to the Subject. A very ingenious Writer * hath already obliged the World with a just, and lively Description of this great and good Man; and amidst all the *Beauties of Oratory*, hath kept within the strictest Bounds of *Historical Truth*. But Dr. WATERLAND was sufficiently known to His *Cotemporaries*; and His *Works* will deliver Him down with Honour to *Posterity*—He wants neither Marbles nor Epitaphs to fence against Oblivion: By His learned Defences of Christianity, He hath raised himself a *perpetual Monument*; and hath render'd it needless to have His Character drawn by any other Pen, from the Reputation He hath acquir'd by *His own*—I cannot help just mentioning the Public Stand He made against *Arianism*, when supported by One, whose great Reputation for Learning had, both at Home and Abroad, been justly acknowledged: A Cause, wherein His Adversaries were silenced by the Force of His Arguments; and that *over-forward Gentleman*, who put our Author's *Queries* to the Press without His Consent or Knowledge (*Queries* sent Him in *friendly Letters*, and by way

* Mr. SEEP's *Sermon*, on Occasion of the Death of Dr. WATERLAND: Preached at Twickenham-Chapel, January the 4th, 1740-1.

of *private Correspondence only* †) soon found Reason to repent (I don't say He *did* repent) of His Conduct.

IN these, and many other learned Tracts upon the most abstruse and difficult Points, His Notions are so clear, and His Expression so happy, that the most abstracted Subjects become, in His Hands, easy and intelligible; and His Ideas are convey'd to the Minds of *Others*, with the same Clearness with which He conceived them in *His own*. These will render His Name more lasting, than the greatest *Titles* and *Preferments* would have done—Those He affected not, nor was solicitous to have them—If He had any *Ambition*, it was to *deserve* them: And it is a *greater Honour* to Him, that our most excellent Primate, to whom *Merit* is always the *chief Recommendation*, thought Him *worthy* of them; than it is to *Others* to be, by the *common Methods*, *actually advanc'd* to them. Nor was He less sensible of the great Honour done Him by the whole Body of the *Convocation*, in chusing Him Their *Prolocutor*; though, for some Reasons, He found it proper to decline it.

BUT His Learning and Abilities, tho' great and admirable, I look upon as the least Part of His Praise. He had, indeed, an *excellent Head*; but He had too, what is infinitely more valuable, an *honest Mind*. The Character He Himself hath described in one of His Sermons, is so exactly His own, that it seems to be a Transcript only of His own Heart——“He
“ was a Person of great Simplicity and Integrity, remarkable
“ for His honest, and upright Heart, His frank and open
“ Conversation, and for His Plainness and Sincerity in all His
“ Dealings. He had no sinister or selfish Views, no Deceit
“ nor Craftiness in Him. His Designs were all just, fair, and
“ honourable. His Conduct equal, clear, and uniform. In
“ a word, His Tongue, His Hand, and His Heart all went
“ together.”

HE hath already approved Himself to the learned World as a most able Writer in *critical* and *metaphysical* Discourses; and in These now publish'd, He will be found to have acquitted Himself with equal Honour in *practical* Ones.—The following Sermons are truly such: And what the *Author's* Opinion was of such Kind of Discourses, may be seen in His *Preface* to the *Second Edition* of Mr. BLAIR's *Sermons*, p. 6.
“ When I say *practical*, let no One be so weak as to take that
“ for a *diminutive* Expression; which is indeed the *highest* and
“ *brighest* *Commendation* that a *Work* can have; whether we
“ look

† Vid. WATERLAND's *Preface* to his *Vindication of Christ's Divinity*.

“ look at the intrinsic *Use* and *Value* of it, or at the real *Difficulties* of performing it to a Degree of Exactness, or at the *Talents* requisite for it. A Man bred up in the *Schools*, or conversant only with Books, may be able to write *Systems*, or to discuss *Points*, in a clear and accurate Manner : But That, and more is required in an *able Guide*, a compleat *practical Divine*, Who undertakes to bring down the most important Truths to the Level of a *popular Audience*; to adapt them properly to *Times*, *Persons*, and *Circumstances*; to guard them against *latent* Prejudices, and *secret* Subterfuges; and lastly, to inforce them with a becoming Earnestness, and with all the prudent Ways of Insinuation and Address. A Person must have some Knowledge of *Men*, besides That of *Books*, to succeed well here; and must have a Kind of *practical Sagacity* (which Nothing but the Grace of God, joined with Recollection and wise Observation, can bring) to be able to represent Christian Truths to the *Life*, or to any considerable Degree of Advantage.” — The Author hath here laid down the *necessary Qualifications* of a *practical Divine*, and the Reader of the following Sermons will find, that He hath given us, in *Himself*, a compleat Example of One. If Some may have look'd upon Him as a mere *Scholar*, conversant only in the Learning of the *Schools*; They will here find They were mistaken, and that He understood *Men* as well as He did *Books*. It appears, from the following Discourses, that He had a thorough Insight into Human Nature, understood the secret Springs and Movements of the Passions, and the whole *Anatomy*, if I may so speak, of the Human Mind. His Way is always, first, to search out the *Seat* of the *Disease*, and in what *Passion* the *latent Seeds* of it are situated; and then to apply the Remedy *there* with consummate Skill, and a masterly Hand — They will be found full of sound Reasoning, just and proper Observations, and excellent Rules for the Conduct of Life. As His great Design was the *instructing His Audience*, He chose rather to *inform the Mind* than *amuse the Imagination*, and to be *understood* rather than *admired*.

THE *Stile* is simple and unadorned, but clear and nervous; and such an *unusual Plainness* runs thro' the whole, that perhaps it is a Kind of *Stile* which never yet appeared; but which wants only to *appear*, in order to be *admired* and *imitated*.

BUT what gave a *peculiar Force* and Efficacy to His *Instructions*, was a *Life answerable to them*; while He stood forth
 a Pattern

a Pattern of what He taught, and was *Himself* the Character He was recommending to *Others*.

At the End of the *Second Volume* there are *Two Tracts*; I. *A Summary View of the Doctrine of Justification*. II. *An Enquiry concerning the Antiquity of Infant-Communion*.

I.

THE Subject of *Justification* was the Occasion of great Controversy in the last Century. During twenty Years Confusion in Church and State, many Books were published on this Subject by the contending Parties; All maintaining Their several Schemes and Hypotheses with equal Zeal, and perplexing the plain, natural Sense of the inspired Writers, with learned Sophistry and metaphysical Subtleties.

UPON this Occasion, in Order to restore and settle the Peace of the Church in Relation to a Point of so great Importance, the learned and judicious Mr. BULL, afterwards Bishop of St. David's, composed, about the Year 1660, being then about Twenty Seven Years of Age*, His most incomparable Piece, entitled *Harmonia Apostolica*, &c. well known to the Learned, which He published, A. D. 1669. In which Work, and His *Examen Censurae*, &c. and *Apologia pro Harmonia*, &c. written against the several Persons who appeared against Him in the Cause He had undertaken, He hath, in a Manner, exhausted the Subject, clearing and settling the true Nature of the Doctrine, to the Satisfaction of every learned and impartial Judge. But there hath of late Years sprung up among Us a Sect of Men, who are reviving the *Solifidian* Doctrine; contending that We are so justified by *Faith alone*, as to exclude good Works from being necessary Conditions of *Justification*; admitting them to be only necessary *Fruits* and *Consequences* of it†: And Bishop BULL's Works, now mentioned, being wrote in *Latin*, and so of no Service to unlearned Readers, from whom this Sect of Men gather Their Converts; there seemed to be wanting some Treatise in *English* on this Subject‡, which might set that important Point of Doctrine in a clear Light to common Christians.: And This seems to have been the Occasion of Dr. WATERLAND's writing the Treatise here

* Harmoniam quidem scripseram circa Annum Ætatis vicesimum septimum. Apolog. pro Harm. Sect. viii. § 5. p. 60. Edit. Grabe.

† Vid. WHITEFIELD's Answer to the Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter, p. 24, 25.

‡ There is a small Discourse of Saving or Justifying Faith, by Dr. STEBBING: But it is in a different Method from our Author's; and Both may be useful. This is included in the *selected* of Stebbing's polemical tracts 1727.

here published; wherein He hath reduced the Subject to a very short Compass, and, under *Five Heads*, which take in all that is necessary to be considered for clearing the Subject, hath given us *A Summary View of the Doctrine of Justification*.

He considers, I. What the *Name* imports. — II. What the *Thing* contains. — III. How it stands *distinguished* from *Renovation* and *Regeneration*. — IV. What are the *concurring Causes* on God's Part, and on *Man's*, to produce it, and preserve it. — V. What are the common *Extremes* which Many have been apt to run into on this Head, and how they may be avoided: And the Sum is, that we are *justified* by God the *Father*, consider'd as *Principal*; and by God the *Son*, as *meritorious Purchaser*; and by God the *Holy Ghost*, as immediate *Efficient*; and by *Baptism*, as the ordinary *Instrument of Conveyance*; and by *Faith*, of such a Kind, as the ordinary *Instrument of Reception*; and lastly, by *Faith* and *Holiness*, as the necessary *Qualifications and Conditions*, in Adults, both for the first *receiving*, and for the perpetual *preserving* it*.

THESE several Particulars He hath enquired into, explained, clear'd, and settled them with all That Accuracy, Closeness of Reasoning, and Perspicuity, which are the Characteristics of all His Writings.

As *Baptism* hath been too often omitted, or but slightly mention'd, in Treatises on the Subject of *Justification*; our Author gives it a large and distinct Consideration†. Wherein he shews, that *Baptism*, consider'd as a *Federal Rite*, or Trans-

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action.

* Vid. Summary View, &c. p. 56.

† As our Author hath remarked, that *Baptism* "has been too often omitted, or but perfunctorily mentioned, in Treatises written on the Subject of *Justification*;" Summary View, &c. p. 16; I think it just to Bishop BULL to observe, that That learned and judicious Writer hath not omitted it in *His Works*; urging, that the *Necessity of Baptism* for the *Remission of Sins*, so often spoken of in Holy Scripture and the Writings of the Ancients, is an Argument sufficient alone to overthrow the Doctrine of *Solifidianism*, or Justification by *Faith alone*.

Neccessitas Baptismi, eorumque quæ ad Baptismum disponent, ad Remissionem Peccatorum consequendum, quæ passim in Sacris Scripturis celebratur, atque in Scriptis Veterum fere utramque facit Paginam, Argumentum præbet, quod solum sufficiat funditus evertendo Solifidianismo isti, quem multi tum Sacris Scripturis, tum Patrum Testimoniis astruere conati sunt; uti egregie docuit doctissimus & pientissimus *Thornicius* noster ο μακαριτης in Scriptis suis passim. Namque hinc apparet, Fidem per se non sufficere ad Justificationem obtinendum; sed requiri præterea externum Baptismum, ubi haberi potest; omnino verò necessario requiri Sponsonem illam novae Vitæ, quæ per Baptismum fieri solet—Apologia pro Harmonia, &c. Sect. iv. § 9. p. 23.—Conf. Sect. vii. § 4. p. 41.

P R E F A C E.

action between God and Man, is, in the *New Testament*, and the *ancient Fathers*, either declared or supposed to be the ordinary, necessary, outward *Mean* or *Instrument* in God's Hand, of Man's *Justification*, the immediate and proximate *Form* and *Rite of Conveyance* on God's Part; and consequently of *Reception* on Man's. This He proves from many clear Texts of Scripture; confirming it from the concurring Verdict of the *Antients*, down from the *First Age*, about *A. D.* 70, to the End of the *IVth Century*, or later; and from our *Church's Forms*; concluding this Head with noting, and accounting for A Mistake in some Eminent Moderns, Who have taught that the *first Justification* in Adults, is *antecedent* to *Baptism*, and that *Baptism* rather *seals* and *confirms* it, than *conveys* it; for which Doctrine He sees no sufficient Ground, either in *Scripture*, or *Antiquity*, or in the *public Offices* of our Church; but much the contrary.

OUR learned Author observes, that the *Phrase* of the *Instrumentality of Faith*, very eminent Men, HAMMOND, TILLOTSON, BULL, and TRUMAN (whom He there refers to) have disliked, and rejected the Thing. He therefore *distinguishes* upon the Question; *rejecting* it according to the *false Notion* Some had conceived of it, but *contending* for it in the true and proper Sense of it. He distinguishes the *Instrumentality of Faith* to *Justification*, into an *active*, and a *passive* Sense; rejecting it in the *former*, and maintaining it in the *latter*.—*Faith* cannot be the *Instrument of Conveyance*, in the Hand of the *Efficient Cause*; but may be very properly looked on as the *Instrument of Reception*, on the Part of the *Recipient*. It is not the *Mean* whereby the Grace is *effected*, or *confer'd*; but may be, and is the *Mean* whereby it is *accepted* or *received*.

OUR Author hath here referr'd to Bishop BULL as *rejecting* the *Instrumentality of Faith*. But, upon considering, upon this Occasion, with some Care, what Bishop BULL hath said, He seems to me, as far as I am capable of judging, *not* to reject the *Instrumentality of Faith* *absolutely*, but only in the same Sense in which our Author rejects it, and to admit it in the Sense our Author admits it. He *rejects Faith* from being an *Instrument*, if *Instrument* be understood strictly to signify an *efficient Cause* of *Justification*, or to have a *physical Efficiency*: For, since *Justification* is the free *Act of God alone*, and produced *extra nos*; neither *Faith*, nor any action of *Ours* can have a *physical Efficiency* in producing the Effect of *Justification* *.

But

*—Si *Instrumentum* strictè & propriè sumatur pro *Causa efficiente* minus principali, clarum est, *Fidem* *Justificationis Instrumentum* nullo modo dici posse.

But if, by *Faith* being an *Instrument*, be meant that it is an *Instrument* by which *We* accept *Christ*, and embrace the Benefit of *Justification* procured by Him; He seems not averse from allowing it an *Instrument* in this Sense: But argues, that this *Act* of embracing *Christ*, is totally different from the *Act* of *Justification*; since the *Former* is *Our* *Act*, but *Justification* is the *Act* of *God* alone: And that therefore, although it should be granted, that *Faith* is the *Instrument* of that *Act* whereby we lay hold on *Christ*; yet it will not follow, that *Faith* is therefore the *Instrument* of *Justification* also*: That is, He denies *Faith* to be the *Instrument* of *Justification*; because He understands *Justification* here in the *active* Sense, as the *Act* of *God* alone conferring it on *Man*: But considered in the *passive* Sense, as That by which we lay hold on *Christ*; and receive the Benefit of *Justification* so conferr'd, He seems to have no Objection to calling it an *Instrument*: And He confesses, in the next Sentence, that tho', if we will have *Faith* to be an *Instrument*, it can be so only when consider'd as a *Work* prescribed to *Us*, and performed by the *Grace* of *God*, yet He confesses, I say, that *Faith*, so consider'd, may in some Sense be called a *Mean* or *Instrument*, as being That by which we obtain the Thing which is promised upon that *Condition*†: That is, He allows that, tho' *Faith* cannot be an *Instrument* of *Justification* in the *active* Sense of *Justification*, an *Instrument* on the Part of *God* who justifies; yet it may be an *Instrument* in the *passive* Sense, on the Part of *Man* who receives *Justification* from the Hand of *God*.

I THINK I have here represented the learned *Bishop's* Sentiments truly: And it appears to Me therefore from thence,

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that

Posse. Nam primò cum *Justificatio* sit *Actio* *Dei* solius, eaque tota extra Nos producta, quomodo vel *Fides* nostra, vel quævis nostra *Actio* ad *Justificationis* Effectum producendum *physicam* ullam *Efficientiam* habeat, prorsus ἀκατάληπτον est, &c. Harmonia Apostol. Dissert. 1. cap. 11. § 9. p. 11. Conf. Dissert. 11. cap. xviii. § 6. p. 114.

* — Hunc *Actum* amplectendi *Christum* à *Justificationis* *Actu* *dis* dià παρὼν & toto *Cælo* distare; Cum sit *Actus* *Noster*, *Justificatio* verò solius *Dei*. Etiam si igitur concederemus, habitum *Fidei* esse *Instrumentum*, istius *Actus*, quo *Christum* amplectimur; Qui tamen inde intulerit, *Fidem* esse etiam *Justificationis* *Instrumentum*, manifestissimæ certè *Inconsequentia* reus tenebitur—Ibid. Diss. 1. cap. 11. § 9. p. 11.

† Ut ergo quod *Res* est dicam; Si *Fidem* *Instrumentum* esse velimus, fieri non potest, ut concipiatur alio modo *Instrumentum* esse, quàm quatenus *Opus* est ex præscripto, & per *Gratiam* *Dei* a Nobis præstitum. *Conditio* enim, quatenus præstita est, aliquo modo *Medium*, sive *Instrumentum* dici potest, quo consequimur *Rem* quæ sub *Conditione* promittitur—Ibid.

that He is not to be ranked among Those who reject the Instrumentality of Faith *absolutely*. He seems to Me to distinguish upon the Case, much as our Author hath done: And tho' He dislikes the *Phrase*, yet He rejects the *Thing* as the Instrument of *Conveyance* only, not as the Instrument of *Reception*; though He chuses to call it by another Name: For,

IT may be noted, that there is this *Difference* between Bishop BULL, and our Author; that The Bishop looks upon Faith, consider'd as the *Instrument of Reception*, to be a *Condition* of Justification †: But Dr WATERLAND distinguishes *That Faith* which He reckons among the *Conditions* of Justification, from *That Faith* which He makes the *Instrument of Reception*.—*Faith*, as a *Condition*, means the *whole Complex* of *Christian Belief*: But *Faith*, consider'd as *precisely* the *Instrument of Reception*, means only, in His Account, the *laying hold on Grace*, and *resting in CHRIST's Merits*, in Opposition to our *Own Deservings* §.

I HAVE observed, that there hath risen of late among us a Sect of *Enthusiasts*, who contend, with the old *Solifidians*, that we are *justified by Faith alone*, in such *Manner*, as to *exclude good Works* from being *necessary Conditions* of *Justification*; admitting them to be Nothing more than *necessary Fruits, Signs, or Consequents* of it. This Doctrine hath been lately publicly maintained by One of the Chief Leaders of that Sect; and, in Order to support it, He is pleased to claim the XIth, XIIth, and XIIIth Articles of our Church, as teaching the *same Doctrine* with Him ||.

As I did, some Time since ¶, publish *A Vindication of the Church of England*, in requiring *Subscription from the Clergy to the XXXIX Articles of Religion* in general; I think it the more incumbent upon Me, to take this Opportunity of vindicating those *particular Articles*, now mentioned, from teaching any such Doctrine as they are here supposed to do: Since, if they really could be proved to teach any Thing so contrary to the whole Tenor of Scripture, I should be so far from *defending*

† — Si hoc Sensu *Instrumentum* sumatur (nempe pro *Conditione* live *Instrumento morali*) Fidem esse unicum *Justificationis Instrumentum* omnino negamus: cum (ut jam satis evicimus) etiam poenitentiae Opera non minus necessaria ad *Justificationem* obtinendam à Spiritu Sancto diserte statuuntur.—Ibid. He makes *Faith*, considered as an *Instrument*, to be as much a *Condition* as *Repentance*.—Conf. the foregoing Note †.

§ Summary View, &c. p. 53.

|| Mr. WHITEFIELD's Answer to the Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter, p. 24, &c.

¶ A. D. 1739.

sending the requiring Subscription to them, that I should most heartily join, as I have there declared *, in pleading against it. I shall therefore here take the Liberty of giving a brief Consideration of this Matter, as what may properly enough at this Time, when such Claims are advanced to our *Articles*, attend upon the Treatise of *Justification* now published.

BEFORE I enter upon this Subject, I shall observe, that it is, in general, objected to our *Articles*, that they are form'd upon the Plan of *Calvinism*. Now, one of the *Five Points* of *Calvinism* is, that we are justified by *Faith alone*; and therefore our *XIth Article*, which so speaks, may be urged as teaching the *Calvinistical Doctrine* concerning justifying *Faith*: Therefore I beg leave, for a Confutation of this Pretence, that our *Articles* are *Calvinistical*, to refer to Dr. WATERLAND's Supplement to the Case of *Arian Subscription*, where the Reader may receive sufficient Satisfaction on that Head †. I now pass on to the *Articles* themselves,

ARTICLE XI.

Of the Justification of Man.

IN this Article it is said, that we are justified by *Faith only* — and not for our own *Works*, or *Deservings*. And it is insisted upon, by Those I am here concern'd with, that the Article hereby ascribes our *Justification* to *Faith only*, in such Sense as to exclude good *Works* from being necessary Conditions of it †.

BUT when the Article teaches, that we are justified by *Faith alone*; It does not mean, that all other *Virtues* and good *Works* are to be excluded thereby, from being necessary Conditions of *Justification*; nor, that *Faith* does more in the Business of *Justification* than other *Virtues* do: But that this Proposition, viz. *We are justified by Faith alone*, is true so far only as the Word *Faith* signifies such an Obedience as is joined with a *Trust* in *CHRIST's Merits*, and a renouncing all *Merit* of our own, all *Merit* or *Deservings* in our own *Works* §. Such

* Church of England vindicated, &c. Sect. iv. p. 47.

† P. 43—62.

‡ WHITEFIELD's Answer, &c. p. 24, 25.

§ Summam Rei paucis complectar: cum veteres Protestantess docuerunt, solā Nos Fide justificari, illud non ita intellexerunt, quasi per eam Fidem excludenda essent cæterae Virtutes, cæteraque bona Opera, tanquam ad Justificationem obtinendam nullō modō necessaria, aut quasi

Such is the *Faith* meant in the *Article*, when it is said, *We are justified by Faith only*. Not such *Faith* as excludes good *Works* from being necessary *Conditions* of *Justification*: But a *Faith* which excludes only such *Works* as are done trusting in our own *Merits* and *Deservings*. So the *Article* itself plainly limits it. It does not merely say that we are justified by *Faith only*; but explains it, by saying also, in the Beginning of the *Article*, “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the *Merit* of our Lord and Saviour *JESUS CHRIST* by *Faith*, and not for our own *Works*, or *Deservings*.” Which plainly shews, that *Faith* here means only a *Reliance* on *CHRIST*’s *Merits*, in Opposition to any *Merit* of our own; excluding Good *Works* from the Business of *Justification* no otherwise, than from being pleaded as meritorious, not from being *Conditions*. And the Reason why *Justification* is here particularly and eminently ascribed to *Faith only*, is, Because, as it is by *Faith only*, of all our *Virtues*, that we lay hold on the *Gospel-Covenant*, by which we are justified; therefore our *Justification* may not improperly be attributed to *Faith alone**; That being emphatically the *Instrument* whereby we receive the Grant of *Justification*: But *Obedience* nevertheless is equally a *Condition* or *Qualification*; tho’ not that *Act* of the *Mind* whereby we embrace the *Promises*, as *Faith* is†; which therefore is said, in the *Article*, emphatically, or eminently, to justify. And for the like Reason it is, that *Scripture* expresses all *Evangelical Obedience* by the Name of *Faith*‡.

T H A T

Fides plus aliquid ageret in ipso *Justificationis* *Negotio*, quàm cæteræ *Virtutes*; sed *Propositionem* istam eatenus tantum ut veram recipi voluerunt, quateus *Vox Fidei* denotat talem *Obedientiam*, quæ cum *Fiducia* de *Meritis* *Jesu Christi*, ac *Meritorum* *Nostrorum* perfecta *Abrenuntiatione*, conjuncta est. quæque adeo ex *Opera* omnia excludit, quæ cum *Fiducia* & *Opinione* *Meriti* *Nostrum* fiunt.—*BULL. Harmonia Apostolica*, *Diff. ii. cxviii. § 6. p. 114.*

* *Bishop BULL*, after quoting a Passage from the *Homily of Justification*, proceeds thus.—Ex quibus Verbis clarè elucet, quid summum illud sit, quod in *Negotio Justificationis* ex *Ecclesiae nostrae* *Sententia* *Fidei* distinctè tribuendum sit; nempe quodd, licet cæteræ *Virtutes* non minùs necessariae sint ad *Hominis Justificationem*, quàm ipsa *Fides*, ac *Fides* propriè nihilò plus agat in isto *Negotio*, quàm alia *Virtus*; quia tamen ex omnibus *Virtutibus* *Fides una* *Promissum* amplectitur *Evangelicum* quò *justificamur*, ideo non incommodâ *Locutione* ipsi soli *Justificatio* nostra tribui possit ac soleat; viz. per *Metonymiam* quandam, quâ *Actus* ponitur pro *Obiecto* circa quod versatur. *Ibid. p. 112. Conf. Diff. i. c. vi. § 1. p. 26.*

† *Vid. Summary View of the Doctrine of Justification. p. 47—49.*

‡ *BULL. Harm. Apost. Diff. ii. c. v. § 5. p. 45, 46.*

THAT what I have been here giving is the true and only Sense intended in the *Article*, we need no other Evidence than the *Homily of Justification*. The *Article* itself sends us there for a more full *Explanation* of its Meaning: And in the *Homily* we find it *actually explain'd* in the Sense I have here given of it: Which *Homily*, Bishop Bull hath alledged for the same Purpose; maintaining, and defending This to be the plain Sense, both of the *Homily* and the *Article*, against His Opposers*.

IT is likewise worth observing, that our *Articles* were compiled, next to Scripture and Antiquity, upon the Plan of the *Augustan Confession*, drawn up by MELANCTHON; as learned Men have sufficiently proved†. Infomuch that Bishop BULL says, that He who is ignorant of *this Confession*, will scarce be able to understand the Sense and Meaning of our *Articles*‡. The *Augustan Confession* therefore may be produced as a *Comment* upon our *Articles*. Now, in the XXth *Article* of that *Confession*, They acknowledge *Repentance* to be necessary to *Justification*; and yet, nevertheless, They assert that we are *justified by Faith*: And They explain Their Meaning to be, that, tho' *Repentance* be a necessary Condition of *Justification*; yet we are not justified upon the Account of any *Merit* in our *Repentance*, or other *Good Works*, but for CHRIST's *Merits* only: But we cannot lay hold on this Benefit any otherwise than by *Faith*; by which we believe that we shall be forgiven, and justified for CHRIST's Sake§. Therefore, the saying that we are *justified by Faith*, is plainly here declared to be consistent with saying that *Repentance*, and other *good Works*, are necessary Conditions of *Justification*. And since This is declared

* BULLI Harmonia Apostolica. Diss. ii. c. xviii. § 6. p. 110---114.

—Examen Censuræ. Respons. ad Animadvers. xxiii. p. 103---106.

—Apologia pro Harmonia. Sect. v. p. 28—34.

Conf. Harmon. Apostol. Diss. i. c. vi. §. 1. p. 26.

† WATERLAND's Supplement to the Case of Arian Subscription, p. 51, 52.

BULLI Apolog. pro Harmon. Sect. vi. § 3. p. 35.

‡ Harm. Apostol. Diss. ii. c. xviii. §. 6. p. 110.

§ Quamquam igitur Contritio aliqua, seu Pœnitentia, necessaria est, tamen sentiendum est, donari Nobis Remissionem Peccatorum, & fieri Nos ex Injustis Justos, id est, Reconciliatos seu Acceptos, & Filios Dei gratis, propter Christum, non propter Dignitatem Contritionis aut aliorum Operum præcedentium aut sequentium. Sed Fide hoc Beneficium accipiendum est, quia credere Nos oportet, quod propter Christum Nobis donentur Remissio Peccatorum & Justificatio.—August. Confess. Art. XX. De Fide. Vid. Corpus & Syntagma Confessionum, Part II. p. 17, Genév. 1654.

clared by the *Augustan Confession*, upon the Plan of which *our Articles* were formed; it is a very fair, and equitable Conclusion, that *our Articles* therefore meant not, by saying that we are justified by *Faith alone*, to exclude thereby good *Works* from being necessary Conditions of *Justification**.

ARTICLE XII.

Of Good Works.

IN this *Article* it is said, that good *Works* are the *Fruits of Faith*, and follow after *Justification*. From whence it is argued, that, according to this *Article*, Good *Works* cannot be previous Conditions, but only *Fruits* and *Consequents*, of *Justification*†.

BUT a Distinction is here to be made, between good *Works* of Faith, internal, and external. The internal *Works* are Repentance, Hope, Charity, &c. The external *Works* are these *Virtues* of the Mind reduced into outward *Acts*. Now, that these latter *Works* only, are the *Works* meant in the *Article*, which are said to follow after *Justification*, I prove thus.

THE *Works* which are said to follow after *Justification*, are the same *Works* which are said, in the same *Article*, to be the *Fruits of Faith*, by which such *Faith* is as evidently known, as a *Tree* discern'd by the *Fruit*: But, the *Works* which are said to be the *Fruits of Faith*, by which such *Faith* is as evidently known, as a *Tree* discern'd by the *Fruit*; must be external *Works*, external Signs of *Faith*, as the *Fruit* is the external Sign of the *Tree*: Therefore, the *Works* which are said to follow after *Justification*, are only the external *Works*, i. e. the internal *Works* of the Mind reduced into outward *Acts*.

THAT by the *Works* which are here said to be *Fruits of Faith*, are meant external *Works*, is evident by their being said to be such by which a lively *Faith* is as evidently known, as a *Tree* discern'd by the *Fruit*.—*Faith* cannot be evidently known by internal *Works*, or *Virtues*; since they cannot be Signs of it: For Signs must be external and outward; otherwise they cannot make our *Faith* evidently known to others: But these internal *Virtues* are all secret, and as remote from the Eyes of Men as *Faith* itself, 'till it be made known by External *Works*.—If it be said, that the Church here speaks of our *Faith* being evidently

* Conf. BULLI Harmon. Apostol. Diss. ii. c. xviii. § 6. p. 110.

† Vid. WHITEFIELD'S Answer to the Bishop of London, p. 25.

evidently known, not to Others, but to Ourselves; besides that it is a Construction which the Words of the Article will not bear; it will still be the same Thing: For This would be to shew one Thing which is unknown, by another equally unknown: Since these *internal Virtues* are equally as unknown to Ourselves, as our Faith is*.

I CONCEIVE therefore, that this Article is sufficiently vindicated from teaching any such Doctrine, as that we are so justified by Faith only, as to exclude good Works from being previous, necessary Conditions of Justification. The Works said in the Article to follow after Justification, are external Works only; and such Works we allow do follow after it. But nevertheless, the internal Works may, for all that is said in this Article, and do, precede and are necessary Conditions of Justification: And they are these internal Works only, which we assert to be such necessary, previous Conditions.

THE Truth of the Case is, internal Works are necessary, and must be previous to what is called the first Justification; and external Works, which follow after the first Justification, are equally necessary to the second, if Opportunity permit†. Habitual Righteousness, consisting of the internal Works of Faith (such as Repentance, Hope, Charity, and the like) is a necessary Condition of Justification, and goes before it. Actual Righteousness, consisting of external Acts, are necessary to be done after Justification, and follow it; follow the first Justification, and are necessary to be done in order to the second, or to preserving the first. That is, The first Righteousness is necessary for the Reception of the Grant of Justification; The latter Righteousness is equally necessary for preserving the same Grant. And

* Vid. BULLI Harmon. Apostol. Diss. ii. c. xviii. § 8. p. 116.

† Haec quae de absoluta bonorum Operum differuimus, certissima sunt. Nihilominus & hic etiam Cautione aliqua Lectori Christiano Opus erit, ut accuratè distinguat inter Justificationem primam ac secundam, adeoque inter bona Opera, quae ad hanc illamque necessariò requiruntur. Atque hic statuendum omnino est, ad primam Justificationem Opera tantum interna Fidei, Pœnitentiae, Spei, Charitatis, &c. esse absolutè necessariq; caetera verò externa Opera, quae in Factis externis, sive in actuali singularum Virtutum, quas modò enumeravimus, Exercitiis conspiciuntur, Signa tantum esse Fructusque Pietatis internae, & Justificatione posteriora, eaque demum Lege praestanda, si non desit Opportunitas. Hoc dubiò procul illud est, quod voluit Ecclesia nostra in Articulo duodecimo, in quo dicit Opera esse Fructus Fidei, & veluti Signa quibus Fides dignoscitur, quaeque Justificationem Hominis consequuntur. Per Opera enim hic intelligi omnino debent Opera externa, &c.—BULLI Harmon. Apostol. Diss. ii. c. xviii. § 8. p. 115, 116. conf. § 9, 10. p. 116---118. Ibid. c. iii. § 2. p. 38. Ibid. c. xii. § 28. p. 90. Apolog. pro Harmon. Sect. vi. § 7. p. 37.

And This appears to be the Doctrine of the *Homily of Justification*, to which the Compilers of the Articles do, in the foregoing Article, refer for a *more full Explication* of Their Doctrine, on the Point of *Justification**. Or, perhaps, by *good Works following after Justification*, in this Article, may be meant good Works following after *Grace*: For, even the *internal* good Works, which we say must *precede* Justification, as *necessary Conditions* of it, do not precede *Grace*, as I shall shew under the next Article. And there may be Reason to think, that the Compilers might not here perhaps accurately express the *Distinction* between *Grace* and *Justification*; because They appear not to have done it in the following Article, by comparing the *Title* of it with the *Article itself*; the *Title* being, “Of Works done before *Justification*,” and yet the *Article* speaking only of Works done before *Grace*; as I shall have Occasion to observe under that Article.

DOCTOR WATERLAND hath well observed, in the Tract now published, that, since “All of us, or nearly All, are “*baptized in Infancy*, and therefore *regenerated and justified* of “*Course*;—*Good Works* must, in this Case at least (which “*is our Case*) follow after *Justification* and *Regeneration*, if “*they are at all*:—And we need not so much as enquire “*whether good Works precede or follow Justification* in the “*Case of Adults*, since it is not *our Case* †.” But if forward Men will raise these unnecessary Disputes, *teaching Things which They ought not*, and thereby *subverting whole Houses*; it becomes proper and necessary that Their *Mouths should be stopp’d*, by declaring and defending the true and sound Doctrine.

ARTICLE

* Bishop BULL, after quoting a Passage from the *Homily*, proceeds thus---Author distinguens *habitualem* (ut dici solet) *Justitiam nostram* *Virtutibus internis Fidei, Spei, Pœnitentiae, Charitatis, &c.* constantem, ab *actuali Justitia Operum bonorum, sive Factorum conspicuorum*. De *priori* docet, quod *necessariò requiratur* in omni Homine qui *justificatur*; de *posteriori*, quod *postea* (nempe *post Justificationem*) *necessariò præstanda* sit. Nimirum *prior Justitia requiritur* (ut diximus) ad *Gratiam* *Justificationis accipiendam*; *posterior* ad eandem *Gratiam conservandam*.---Apolog. pro Harmon. Sect. v. § 4. p. 29. conf. § 5. p. ib.

The famed Maxim of St. AUSTIN, that *good Works follow after Justification, and do not precede it*, Dr. WATERLAND interprets of *Baptism*; viz. that Men must be *incorporated in Christ*, must be good Christians, before they could practise *Christian Works*, strictly so called.---Summary View, p. 38. i. e. *external Christian Works*. Bishop BULL interprets it another Way---Harmon. Apostol. Diss. ii. c. iii. § 2. p. 38. & GRABII Annot. ib. p. 39.

† Summary View, &c. p. 59, 60.

ARTICLE XIII.

Of Works before Justification.

Mr. WHITEFIELD hath printed This Article, together with the other Two, at the End of His *Answer* to the *Bishop of London*; But I don't find that He draws any Argument in particular from This Article. However, the Use I suppose to be made of it is, to conclude from it, that, since the *Article teaches* that "Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of His Spirit, are not pleasant to God, so farasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Jesus Christ;—yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done,—they have the Nature of Sin;" therefore the same *Article must teach* that *good Works* cannot be done *before Justification*.

BUT I apprehend, that one short Answer will suffice to vindicate This Article, from teaching any such Doctrine.

THOUGH *Works* done before the *Grace* of Christ, are not pleasant to God, but rather, not being done as God hath commanded, have the Nature of Sin †; that is, though such *Works* may be *materially* good, they are *formally* Evil; yet, *Works* done before *Justification*, may be pleasant to God, and not have the Nature of Sin; may be *good Works*, and *previously necessary*, as such, to *Justification*. For it is one Thing to say, that Good *Works* precede *Grace*; and another to say, they precede *Justification*. The *Former* we say not: The *Latter* only we maintain. *Grace*, and *Justification*, which are really *distinct*, should not be *confounded* together. No *Work truly good* can precede *Grace*; because, without *Grace*, no such *Work* can be performed: But *Good Works* may, and do, precede *Justification*; for *Grace* is given before *Justification*, that *good Works* may be perform'd, by which we attain *Justification* †.

I am

* Vid. VITRING. *Observ. sacr. Lib. III. cap. xii.*—Tom. 2. p. 622.

BULL. *Harm. Apostol. Diss. ii. c. v. § 4.* p. 44.

BURNET's *Exposit. of the xxxix Articles.*—Art. xiii. p. 132. Ed. 4.

SHARROCK *de Fin. & Offic.* p. 52.

CLARKE's *Posth. Sermons.*—Serm. xiii. Vol. iv. p. 317, &c.

BENNET's *Directions*, p. 78.

† Res est, nulla Opera verè bona præcedere posse Gratiam Dei, cum sine Gratia illa ne præstari quidem possint. At possunt Opera bona præcedere

I am aware, that the *Title* of the Article is, "Of Works before *Justification*." But the *Article itself* says not a Word of Works before *Justification*; but only of Works before the *Grace* of Christ, and the *Inspiration of His Spirit*: And the *Title* must be explained by the *Article*, and not the *Article* by the *Title*. And therefore the Doctrine of the *Article* being only about Works done before *Grace*; we must conclude, that, by *Works before Justification*, in the *Title*, are meant only Works before *Grace*; as the Meaning is explained to be in the *Article* itself.

I HAVE thus given a brief Vindication of the XIth, XIIth, and XIIIth Articles of our Church, from teaching any such Doctrine, as that we are *so justified* by *Faith alone*, as to exclude good Works from being previous, necessary Conditions of *Justification*. And if They who are vending about this *False Doctrine*, and claiming these *Articles* as on Their Side, had more of that *Letter-Learning* They despise, and less of that *Assurance* They are noted for; They would be *wiser Men Themselves*, and fitter to *teach Others*, than They at present appear to be.—But *Ignorance*, the greater it is, is always the bolder.

II.

THE other *Treat* is on the Subject of *Infant-Communion*.

THE Author, in his *Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 183, 184, observes, that the *Fathers*, both in the *Greek* and *Latin Churches*, for the first *Four Centuries*, or somewhat more, never interpreted *John vi.* directly of the *Eucharist*: But that, by the frequent applying the general Doctrine of *spiritual feeding*, there spoken of, to the particular Case of the *Eucharist*; Many, among the *Latins* especially, came, about the Beginning of the *Fifth Century*, to interpret it directly of the *Eucharist*, and so to think, that *John vi.* 53. was as decisive a Text for the *Necessity* of the *Eucharist*, as *John iii.* v. was for the *Necessity* of *Baptism*. Having observed This, He proceeds to say, that, "Hereupon ensued a common Practice of giving the Communion to mere *Infants*. Pope *Innocent I.* is believed to have been the First, or principal Man that brought up such Doctrine of the *Necessity* of communicating *Infants*."——In the Margin, after referring to *WALL* and *BINGHAM*, He says, "Compare Mr. *PIERCE's* Essay on

"Infant-

cedere Justificationem, imò & revera præcedunt; quippe datur *Gratia* ante Justificationem, ut præstentur ea, quibus ad Justificationem perveniatur.---Harmon. Apostol. Dissert. ii. c. xii. § 28. p. 90.

“ Infant-Communion, who carries it much higher than
 “ Others, upon Suggestions which bear a plausible Appearance, and are worth examining by some Person of Learning
 “ and Leisure. But in the mean while, I acquiesce in Dr.
 “ WALL’s Account, as one that was well considered, and
 “ which, in my Opinion, cannot be far from the Truth.”
 — And in another marginal Note, after referring to WALL and VOSSIUS, for St. AUSTIN’s being supposed to have interpreted *John vi. 53.* of the *Necessity* of the *Eucharist* to Salvation, He adds, “ But THORNDIKE disputes it with some Shew of
 “ Reason.”

FROM the Manner of expressing Himself in these Passages, it appears, though He followed the *common Opinion*, that the Doctrine of the *Necessity* of *Infant-Communion*, founded on *John vi. 53.* and the *Practice* consequent thereupon, prevailed in the *Vth Century*; yet, that He was not clear in His Judgment about it, but had some Scruples in Relation thereto. For though He acquiesced in Dr. WALL’s Account for the present, looking upon Him as One who had well considered the Matter; and observed, that Mr. PIERCE had carried the Practice still higher, upon Suggestions which bear a plausible Appearance; yet, He thought those Suggestions worth *examining* further into. And though He had said, that St. AUSTIN is supposed to have construed *John vi. 53.* of the *Necessity* of the *Eucharist* to Salvation, referring to WALL, and VOSSIUS; yet He was not so well satisfied of the Truth of such Supposition, but to add, that THORNDIKE *disputes it with some Shew of Reason*; doubtful all the while How this Matter might turn out upon further Enquiry: And accordingly He Himself enquired deeper into it, before the Book was publish’d, as appears by the following *Advertisement* prefixed to it.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

“ In p. 184, I have followed the common Opinion of some
 “ learned Protestants (Mr. BINGHAM, Dr. WALL, &c) in
 “ Relation to *Infant-Communion*, as prevailing in the *Vth*
 “ Century, under a Notion of it’s strict *Necessity*, built upon
 “ *John vi. 53.* Though I had some Scruple about it; as
 “ may appear by my Manner of expressing myself, and by
 “ the Reference to THORNDIKE at the Bottom.

“ HAVING since looked somewhat deeper into that Question, I think it now just to my Readers, to advertise Them,
 “ that I apprehend That *common Opinion* to be a *Mistake*; and
 “ that

“ that though the Practice of giving the Communion to *Children* at *Ten* or at *Seven* Years of Age (or somewhat sooner) was *ancient*, and perhaps *general*, yet the Practice of Communicating *mere Infants*, under a Notion of it's *Necessity*, and as built upon *John vi*, came not in before the *VIIIth* or *IXth* Century, never was *general*; or however lasted not long in the *West*, where it first began. My Reasons for this Perswasion are too long to give here: But I thought this short Hint might be proper, to prevent Mis-Conceptions as to That Article.”

THE Tract now submitted to the Judgment of the Learned, is the Result of our Author's further Enquiry into this Subject; wherein the Reader will find at large, the Reasons for the Opinion delivered in the above Advertisement.

THE Thing was mentioned incidentally only in his *Review*, where Nothing was built upon it: And though That might be one Occasion of His looking further into it; yet He had other Motives for so doing, esteeming it a Point worth clearing up.

SOME have censured the *Ancients*, as having *erred* in teaching the *Necessity* of *Infant-Communion*, and *practising* it upon such *erroneous Principles*; in order to detract in general from the *Authority* of the *Ancient Fathers*. Among These is, particularly, Mr. DAILLE, in His Treatise concerning the Use of the Fathers for determining the Controverted Heads of Religion; Who, in Lib. II. cap. iv. concerning the Errors of the Fathers, having, among the Rest, brought in St. CYPRIAN, as falling in with the Error of that Age, the Doctrine of the *Necessity* of the *Eucharist* to *Baptized Infants**; and St. AUSTIN, as teaching the Same†; closes the Chapter with concluding from thence, that, since the *Fathers* were guilty of *so many Errors*, Their Opinions are not of *Weight enough* to shew the *Truth* of any *Controverted Point*‡.

THOUGH

* Idem Beatus Martyr [Cyprianus] in sui Seculi Errore versabatur, putans Omnibus Baptizatis, ne Pueris quidem exceptis, Eucharistiam esse ad Salutem necessariam —DALLÆI de Ufu Patrum, Lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 263. Latin. Edit. Genevæ, 1686.

† Statuit etiam Augustinus Eucharistiam Pueris necessariam.—Ibid. p. 280.

‡ —Videor ex his jam meritò posse concludere, cum Patres tot modis erraverint, five seorsum singuli, five conjunctim plures, nec privatam singulorum sententiam, nec plerorumque ex iis Consensum Argumentum esse satis firmum ad eorum Caput quæ hodie controvertuntur certò demonstrandum Veritatem.—Ibid. p. 294.

THOUGH it be the *immediate* Design of Mr. DAILLE's Treatise to shew (from the *Uncertainty* of determining clearly what the Opinions of the *Fathers* were, and from Their not being *infallible* in Their Opinions, though clearly known) that the *Fathers* cannot be made *Judges* in the *Controversies* between *Protestants* and *Papists*; yet it plainly appears, that He was willing hereby to decry *Their Authority* in general §: Which others have made a very bad Use of, as it must be obvious They would do, though with little Reason: For, tho' it be true, that the *Fathers* were not *Infallible*, and may have *erred* in Points of *less Consequence*; yet it is running into *unjustifiable Extremes* to conclude from thence, as Some have done, that therefore there is *no Credit* to be given to the *Verdict* of *Antiquity* at all; that They have *erred* in *Fundamentals*, or in delivering down the Canonical Books of Scripture, and the *fundamental Doctrines* therein contained. Though Mr. DAILLE Himself might have no Design of running to such *Extremes*; yet He hath given an Handle to Others for so doing: And though He professes to add the IVth Chapter of His Book, concerning the Errors of the *Fathers*, *unwillingly**; yet, as a judicious Writer observes, He hath made it hard for Us to believe it, when we find that He has made Their Errors *more* and *greater* than they really are †. Nor does it appear consistent with the great Regard He would seem to pay to Their Characters ‡, to have been so diligent in collecting, and publishing Their *Errors*, without *Evidence* *sufficient* against such great and good Men; who have received Their *Vindication*, against the Accusations of this Writer, from several learned Hands ||; as They have also done, against the like Objec-
tions

§ Quæ duobus superioribus Capitibus disseruimus sufficere arbitror, ut Quivis moderato Ingenio præditus apud se constituat, non tantam esse in Rebus ad Religionem pertinentibus, quam Vulgus existimat, Patrum Auctoritatem. Ibid. p. 252.

* Poterunt ergo, Quicunque sint æqui Lectores, hoc & sequens Caput prætermittere, quod utrumque *paene invito* subicere cogor, ut iis, qui se Studiis suis abripi patiuntur, Excusationem omnem præcidam—acgre quidem, &, quod ait Poëta, ἀέκοντι Δυμῶ hanc Disputationis Partem aggredior.—Ibid. p. 253.

† WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism, Part ii. cap. ix. § 15—Vol. 2. p. 436.

‡ Grave enim est, & a Pudore nostro alienum, Hominum, præsertim Sanctorum & merito Venerabilium Nævos ac Labes spectare ac ostentare. DAILLE' ib. p. 253.

|| SCRIVENER in Apologia pro Sanctis Ecclesiæ Patribus adv. DALLÆUM, Par. ii. cap. iv. p. 185.

tions of Mr. BARBEYRAC, by the Pen of our learned Author in another Treatise*. Many Errors imputed to Them have, upon Review, been found to be the Errors only of Those who so imputed them: And the Tract now published hath taken away *one Error more* from Mr. DAILLE's Catalogue, by shewing, that the *Doctrine of the Necessity of Infant-Communion* was really never taught by those ancient Fathers, whose Doctrine it hath commonly been thought to have been.

THE Fathers were Men, therefore fallible, and not to be acquitted of all Mistakes, unless we could acquit Them too of Human Frailties. But though we should not dissemble the real Errors of the Fathers; yet it becomes Us to be cautious in our Censures, not to lay more Errors to Their Charge, than They were really guilty of; nor to be over-zealous in searching out every Occasion of carping at Their Writings; nor to aggravate, beyond Reason, those Errors which They may be found to have fallen into; lest we thereby give an Handle to the Enemies of Religion to turn it to a bad Use, by decrying the Authority of Antiquity in general, and in Relation to the weightier Matters of our Faith. BUDDÆUS, who seems to be a great Admirer of Mr. DAILLE's Book, speaking of ZORNIIUS who wrote against it, confesses This†; And tho' he was no very zealous Advocate for the Fathers, speaks of Them in very handsome Terms, not running the Lengths of Those who talk only as Their Prejudices direct Them, without knowing any Thing of the Matter. BUDDÆUS was a Man of Learning, and knew what He said: And therefore, at the same Time that He cannot acquit the Fathers of all Errors and Faults (and who ever pretended to do it?) declares Them to have been excellent Men, judicious, pious, virtuous, and learned for the Times They lived in‡. He takes the middle

CAVEI Epistola Apologetica.

ZORNIIUS Hamburgensis Vindiciae Patrum, oppositae JOANNI BAL-
LÆO, &c. In Opuscul. Ejus Sacr. Tom. I.

* WATERLAND's Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, cap. vii, p. 412—436. Ed. 1.

† Lubens sane fateor, caute hac in Re procedendum, ne Vitia & Naevos Patrum ultra, quam decet, exaggerando, & curiose nimis, quas carparamus, in Illorum Scriptis, conquirendo, ipsam quoque Religionem Christianam, Doctrinamque Sacram, profanorum Hominum Ludibrio exponamus. Nec tamen ideo omnia in Patribus laudanda, aut Naevia Vitia, & Errores dissimulandi; cum Tela, quae inde forte Homines impii, aut dissidentientes, contra Nos depromunt, alia repellere Ratione queamus.—BUDDÆI Isagog. ad Theolog. Lib. ii. cap. iii. § 13. Tom. I. p. 542.

‡ Fuerunt inter Eos Viri praestantes, pollentes Ingenio, & pro istorum Temporum Ratione eruditi, Virtutis quoque Sanctitatisque Laude florentes; nec tamen Naevorum, Errorum, Vitiolorum, humanaeque Imbecillitatis plane expertes.—Ibid, p. 549.

middle Way, neither ascribing too much, nor too little to Their Authority †. He is so far from *despising* Them, as They only do who are *ignorant* of Them, that He *recommends* the *diligent Study* of Them, not only as *useful*, but as *absolutely necessary* in Order to an exact Knowledge in *Ecclesiastical Antiquity* §: And declares that, notwithstanding the Errors of This or That *single Father* in some Points; yet the *true Catholic Doctrine* and *Faith of the Church* may be found in them ||.

— The Reader will excuse this short Digression concerning the *Fathers*, which the Mention of Mr. DAILLE's Treatise hath led me into. I chose to be a little particular in representing the Sense of BUNDAEUS upon this Head; because, being a learned and judicious Man, and no great Admirer of the *Fathers*, His moderate Opinion, and Recommendation of Them, will carry a double Force, and may be of Use to procure a more favourable Reception for Them among Those, who will not regard what is said of Them by Others, whom They look upon as more prejudiced in Their Favour. — I now return.

As Mr. DAILLE' hath imputed to the *Fathers* the *Doctrine* of the *Necessity* of *Infant-Communion*, in Order to destroy Their Credit in general; so there are Others who have taken Advantage from this *supposed Doctrine* and *Prædica*, to lessen Their Credit in Respect particularly to *Infant-Baptism*. The *Antipædobaptists*, Who say that the Custom of Giving *Infants* the *Communion* was, anciently, as *general* as the *Baptizing* Them *, argue thus: The *Antients* taught the *Necessity* of *Infant-Communion*; and thereupon gave *Infants* the *Eucharist*, as well as *Baptism*: But All allow, that They were guilty of an Error

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† De Auctoritate Illi recte sentiunt, Qui, media quadam Via incedentes, nec plus, nec minus, quam decet, Illis tribuunt. Ibid. p. 539.

--- Nec omnis erga Veteres istos Ecclesiae Doctores, Quibus multa debemus, abjicienda Veneratio; sed accurate simul, diligenterque dispi-ciendum, ne, dum modesti videri volumus, in Veritatem simus injurii. Ibid. p. 543.

§ Antiquitatis & Historiae Ecclesiasticae Notitiam adcuratorem sine Patrum Lectione Neminem sibi comparare posse, adeo manifestum est, ut Ignorantiam suam proditurus esset, qui secus sentiret. --- Atq; hæc cum ita se habent, Nos Patres neutiquam contemnere, manifestum est; sed Eorum potius Lectionem, si recte instituat, ceu utilem maxime ac salutarem, omnibus commendare. --- Ibid. p. 544.

|| Hi ipsi autem Naevi atq; Errores Patrum, dum Hic in illo, Alius in alio Capite erravit, non obstant, quo minus, si ex Omnibus adsumantur, quae recte dicta sunt, verae inde Catholicaeq; Doctrinae in Ecclesia perpetua Conservatio Propagatioq; intelligi queat. Ibid. p. 505.

* Vid. WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. Part. ii. c. ix. § 15. --- Vol. 2. p. 435, 436.

in giving the *Eucharist* to *Infants*; and therefore there can be no Reason to lay any great Stress on *Their Authority*, or to regard *Their Opinion* or *Practice*, in giving Them *Baptism* †.

As These I have hitherto mentioned have pleaded the *Antiquity* of the *Practice of Infant-Communion*, as founded on the *Doctrine* of its *strict Necessity*, in Order to censure the *Fathers* as guilty of *Error* therein; so there have been Others, on the Contrary, who have pleaded the Same, in *Favour* of such *Practice*, and to recommend the *Revival* of it. Bishop BEDELL, of the last Century, Bishop of *Kilmore* in *Ireland*, occasionally mentions it in a Letter to Dr. WARD, Master of *Sidney-College* in *Cambridge* ‡. And Mr. PIERCE of *Exon*, in the Year 1728, published an *Essay in Favour of the ancient Practice of giving the Eucharist to Children*.

THESE were the Motives which excited Dr. WATERLAND to examine whether the *Fact* itself be true, from the *Supposal* of which these *several Conclusions* are drawn: *i. e.* whether the *ancient Fathers* really *practised Infant-Communion* under an Opinion of its *strict Necessity* to *Salvation*. For, if They did not; then, neither does Mr. DAILLE's Argument, with Respect to This particular Point, hold good for *censuring* it as *ancient Practice built on erroneous Principles*; nor That of the *Antipædobaptists*, in *Derogation* from the *Authority* of the *Fathers* for *Infant-Baptism*; nor, on the other Hand, Those of Bishop BEDELL and Mr. PIERCE, for *reviving* the *Practice*, so far as They plead for it on supposing such to have been the *ancient Doctrine* and *Practice*.

As Dr. WATERLAND hath fallen immediately to the *Business* of His *Enquiry* into the *Antiquity* of this *Doctrine* and *Practice*, without staying to give any previous, particular Account of the *several Sentiments* of *Learned Moderns* on that Head; It may not be improper to note how that Matter stands, for the Use of common Readers; and to be more particular in Relation to this Tract, it being on a Subject not so commonly known.

I. Mr. WALL, Author of the *History of Infant-Baptism*, hath given it as His Opinion, that in CYPRIAN's Time, about

† Conf. WALL *ibid.* § 17.---Vol. 2. p. 447.

‡ —And so did also Children baptized in the primitive Church communicate in the Lord's Supper. Which I know not why it should not be so still.—Vid. Archbishop USHER's Letters published with his Life, by Dr. PARR. 1686.—No. CLXIII. p. 442.

—As for diverse Ages They did [*i. e.* Children did receive the *Eucharist*] and by the Analogy of the Passover They may, perhaps ought, &c, —*ibid.* p. 445.

about the Middle of the *Third Century*, the People of the Church of *Carthage* did oftentimes bring Their *Children younger than ordinary* to the *Communion**; probably at four or five Years of Age†. This He concludes from a Story which CYPRIAN tells, in his Book *De Lapsis*, concerning a *Girl* who, in the *Decian Persecution*, was carried by Her Nurse to the *Idol-Feast*, and partook of the *Sacrifices*, and was afterwards brought by Her Mother to the *Communion* while St. CYPRIAN was administering. Now as This must have been after CYPRIAN's Return to *Carthage*, upon the ceasing of the Persecution, which was *A. D. 251*‡; so high, from this Instance, must Mr. WALL suppose this Custom to have prevailed in the Church of *Carthage*.

IN AUSTIN's, and Pope INNOCENT the 1st's Time, the Beginning of the *Fifth Century*, He thinks it was given, in the Western Parts, to *mere Infants*: And that This continued, from that Time, for about 600 Years§——that *These Fathers taught such Practice*, upon an Opinion of it's *Necessity* to the *Salvation of Baptized Infants* || —— that INNOCENT did first bring up such Doctrine, and that St. AUSTIN followed Him in it ¶.

As to the *Greek Church*, He thinks that some Time during the Space of the aforementioned 600 Years, when it was low in the World, That Church took this Custom from the *Latin Church*, which was more flourishing**.

AND that the *Roman Church*, about the Year 1000, entertaining the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, let fall the Custom of giving the Holy Elements to *Infants*: And that the other *Western Churches*, mostly following Their Example, did the like upon the same Account: But that the *Greeks*, not having the said Doctrine, continued, and do still continue, the Custom of *Communicating Infants* ††.

THIS is the Sum of Mr. WALL's Account, which may be seen at large in the Place referred to in the Margin ††.

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* WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. Part ii. c. ix.—Vol. 2. p. 446. Ed. 3.

† Ibid. p. 440.

‡ Persecutione sopita Anno 251, Latebris egressus, & Ecclesiae suae Reditus, &c.—CAVEI Hist. Liter. p. 126. Ed. 1740.

§ WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. lb. p. 446.

|| Ibid. p. 445.

¶ Ibid. p. 441, 442.

** Ibid. p. 446.

†† Ibid. p. 446.

|| WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism, Part ii. c. ix. § 13, 16... Vol. 2. p. 435-446.

He carries the *Practice* as high as CYPRIAN's Time, *A. D.* 251. And the same *Practice* as founded on the Doctrine of it's *Necessity* to the *Salvation* of *Baptized Infants*, to the Time of AUSTIN and INNOCENT I. about the Beginning of the Vth Century.

2. MR. BINGHAM, in His *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, mentions the giving the *Eucharist* to *Infants*, as a *known Practice* and *Custom* of the *Ancient Church*, and That *immediately* from the *Time of Their Baptism*; citing for it, CYPRIAN, AUSTIN, INNOCENTIUS, and GENNADIUS, Writers from the IIIrd, to the Vth Century §.

IN another Place He says, that it is *beyond Dispute*, that the Church *immediately* admitted *Infants* to a Participation of the *Eucharist*, as soon as They were *baptized*; quoting CYPRIAN again for the *Practice*, and AUSTIN, with Pope INNOCENT His Cotemporary, as *seeming to say* it was *necessary* for *Infants*, in Order to obtain *Eternal Life*; referring to some Passages of St. AUSTIN, and INNOCENT's *Epistle* to AUSTIN and the *Council of Milevis* †.

AND it appears to have been Mr. BINGHAM's own Opinion, that the *Primitive Church*, *Greek* and *Latin*, from St. CYPRIAN's Time, really gave the *Communion* to *Infants*, from an Opinion of it's *Necessity*, founded upon a *Divine Command*, *John vi. 53* *.

HE acquaints Us, that MALDONATE says, the *Custom* continued, even in the *Roman Church*, for *Six Centuries*: But that BONA makes it *double the Number*; for that, according to Him, it was not abrogated in *France* 'till the XIIth Century: that it continued a little longer in *Germany*, if SURCERUS doth not mistake in the Author He quotes for it: that ZUINGLIUS speaks of the *Custom* continuing long among the *Helvetians*: and that HOSPINIAN mentions, from His own Knowledge, the *Custom* in *Lorrain* and the Parts adjacent, of the Priest's dipping His Fingers in the Cup, and dropping it into the Child's Mouth *immediately after Baptism*, with these Words, *The Blood of our Lord JESUS CHRIST be of Advantage unto Thee to Eternal Life*.

THAT the *Greek Church* was a little more tenacious of the *Custom*—that NICEPHORUS of the XIVth Century mentions it, and that Dr. SMITH speaks for the *present Greek Church*,

§ BINGHAM's *Orig. Ecclef. B. xii. c. i. Sect. iii.*---Vol. I. of His Works. p. 529. Fol. Ed.

† Ibid. B. xv. c. iv. Sect. vii.---Vol. I. p. 774, 775.

* Ibid. p. 776.

Church, that They give the *Eucharist*, in Both Kinds, to *Children* of one, or two Years old, and sometimes to *new-born Infants* after Baptism, in Case of imminent Danger of Death; grounding Their Belief of an *absolute Necessity* of this Sacrament upon the Words of our Saviour, *John* vi. 53. and pleading the *Practice* of the *Primitive Church* in Their own Justification*.

To this Account which Mr. BINGHAM gives from Dr. SMITH of the *modern Greek Church*; I shall add, that Dr. COVEL, in His Account of the *present Greek Church*, A. D. 1722, says, that They give the *Eucharist* to *sucking Children*, after They are baptized, and anointed, or confirmed †: And that Mr. RYCAUT, in His Account of the *Armenian Church*, mentions the following odd Custom there; viz. that “as soon as the Priest hath sopped the Bread into the Wine” (which is the Manner of distributing the Communion in that Church) “Some Boy, or young Lad, is presently at Hand to lick his Fingers; which He willingly grants Him, esteeming it a Kind of Initiation, or Pledge to Them of receiving the Sacrament hereafter, when They come to Years of Understanding; as the rubbing the Lips of the Infant with the Consecrated Elements, is to Children at the Time of Their Admittance to Baptism ‡.”

FROM this Account it appears, that the *Armenian Church* does not profess to give the *Communion* to *Children*, till they come to *Years of Understanding*; and yet the Custom here mentioned, is certainly more than a *Kind of Initiation*, or *Pledge to Them of receiving the Sacrament hereafter*, since it is *actually receiving* it. But I return,

MR. BINGHAM's Opinion seems to differ from Mr. WALL's in This: That, whereas Mr. WALL supposes the Doctrine of the *Necessity* of the *Eucharist* to the Salvation of Baptized Infants, to be taught no higher than INNOCENT I. whom He takes to have been the *First* who brought up this Doctrine§; Mr. BINGHAM seems to think that this Doctrine of it's *Necessity* was held by the Church *all along* from St. CYPRIAN's Time; though He does not found his Opinion upon any *positive Testimony*, but only looks upon it as absurd to think, that the Church should give the Communion to Infants, without imagining any Manner of *Necessity* from any Divine Command to do it||.

3. PFAFFIUS

* Ibid. p. 776, 777.

† B. ii. c. i. p. 186.

‡ RYCAUT's Account of the Armenian Church. Ch. viii.

§ WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. Part. ii. cap. ix.—Vol. ii. p. 443.

|| BINGHAM's Orig. Eccles. B. xv. c. iv. § vii.—Vol. i. p. 776.

3. PFAFFIUS reckons it among the *Rites* of the III^d *Century*, that the *Eucharist* was given to *Infants*; but has no Authority for it's having been the Custom of any but the *African Church*, to which He refers, quoting for it St. CYPRIAN *De Lapsis* *. He mentions it again, as the *Custom*, in some Places, in the IVth *Century* †; and the *same Custom*, founded upon the Opinion of it's *absolute Necessity*, as one of the *Errors* of the Vth *Century* ‡.

4. MR. DAILLE', in His Treatise *De Usu Patrum*, &c. observes, that the *Council of Trent* decreed, that the *Ancients* admitted *Infants* to the Communion of the *Eucharist*, not as looking upon it to be *necessary* to their Salvation, but only as having a *probable Reason* for so doing. But, says Mr. DAILLE', it seems plain from the *Fathers Themselves*, that They thought the Communion *necessary* to *baptized Infants* §; For which He cites several Passages from St. AUSTIN ¶, INNOCENT I. His Cotemporary ||, and CYPRIAN long before Them **.

HEREBY it appears, that Mr. DAILLE' thought that the *Council of Trent* have given a *wrong Account* of the *Opinion of the Antients* on this Head. He looked upon the *Necessity* of *Infant-Communion* to have been a *Doctrine* as high as St. CYPRIAN: For He not only cites That *Father* for the *Custom*, but also for the *Doctrine* of it's *Necessity* ††. But This is occasioned by a Mistake in the Passage quoted from CYPRIAN, *Epist.* 59.—*Baptizandum & sacrificandum*—So Mr. DAILLE' cites

* PFAFFII Institutiones Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ. Secul. iii. cap. ii. § iv.

† Ibid. Secul. iv. c. iii. § v.

‡ Ibid. Secul. v. c. iii. § iv. Conf. other Ecclef. Writers.

§ Patres Tridentini, *nulla Necessitate Salutis, sed probabilem tantum ob Causam* Veteres, Parvulos Usu Rationis carentes ad Eucharistiæ Communionem suscepisse decernunt. Atqui non modo magna subest de hac Re dubitandi Occasio; sed ex ipsis Patrum Monumentis certò constare videtur Ipsos, Quod Tridentinæ Synodi Pace dictum sit, Parvulorum tinctorum Communionem planè censuisse necessariam.---DAILLEI de Usu Patrum, &c. Lib. i cap. viii. p. 175.

|| Ibid. p. 175. Conf. L. ii. c. iv. p. 289.

¶ Ibid. p. 175, 176.

** Ibid. p. 176. Conf. L. ii. c. iv. p. 263.

†† Extat INNOCENTII Epistola; ac ut deesset non finit Nos AUGUSTINUS ea de Re dubitare. INNOCENTIUS (inquit) *Parvulos definiivit, nisi manducaverint Carnem Filii Hominis Vitam prorsus habere non posse*. Longo ante Tempore CYPRIANUS in eundem *Sensum* ea de Re locutus fuerat. Ibid. p. 176.---Idem Beatus Martyr (CYPRIANUS) in sui Seculi Errore versabatur, putans Omnibus baptizatis, ne Pueris quidem exceptis, Eucharistiam esse ad *Salutem necessariam*, ut apparet ex Epistola LIX, &c. Ibid. L. ii. c. iv. p. 263.

cites it*: But Mr. WALL has observed, that the *Edition* He cites it from, is wrong in that Place: that Dr. HAMMOND, MARSHAL, the *Magdeburgenses*, Mr. WALKER, and All whom He had seen, do quote it *sanctificandum*, as it is also in the *last Edition*, Oxon. 1682. in which are the various Lectons of several MSS. which had been collated, but no Variety in Reading this Word: And that St. AUSTIN has put the Matter beyond Question, who, quoting That Part of the *Epistle* (L. iv. contra duas Epist. Pelag. c. viii.) writes it *sanctificandum*, not *sacrificandum* †.

Mr. WALL adds, that *sacrificandum*, in that Sense, is not *Latin* ‡. And Mr. PIERCE, though He thinks somewhat might be pleaded for such a Sense from CYPRIAN's Stile, yet, upon the whole, He agrees with Mr. WALL, that Mr. DAILLE's *Edition* was faulty herein. But then He contends, that even *sanctificandum* will here signify *receiving the Eucharist*.

He allows, that the Word does *commonly* and *usually* signify *Baptism*, as Mr. WALL argues; But then He urges, that the *Antients* speak of the *Lord's Supper* in the *same Manner*: And to prove it, He cites some Passages from CLEMENT of *Alexandria*, ORIGEN, CYRIL of *Jerusalem*, MACARIUS Archbishop of *Antioch*, and CYPRIAN Himself, wherein the Elements of the *Eucharist* are said *ἀγιάζων* §.

BUT I take the Liberty to answer, that this Remark which Mr. PIERCE has made, by no Means comes up to the Point, nor is any Manner of Proof, that *Sanctificandum*, in the Passage disputed, relates to the *Eucharist*.——

THE Passage is in an *Epistle* of CYPRIAN, in Answer to FIDUS, and runs thus: — “Quantum vero ad Causam Infantium pertinet, Quos dixisti intra secundum vel tertium Diem, quo nati sunt, constitutos, baptizari non oportere, & considerandum esse Legem Circumcisionis antiquæ, ut intra octavum Diem Eum qui natus est baptizandum & sanctificandum non putares; longe aliud in Concilio nostro Omnibus visum est ||”.

THE Question moved by FIDUS, an *African Bishop*, to which This Passage is an Answer, was concerning the Day on which *Infants* ought to be *baptized*: whether, if Need required,

* De Ufu Patrum. L. ii. c. iv. p. 263.

† WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. Part i. c. vi. § 10.---Vol. i. p. 85.

‡ Ibid.

§ Essay in Favour of the Antient Practice of giving the Eucharist to Children. Part i. § vii. p. 46.

|| CYPRIANI Epistola 59. alias 64.

quired, as soon as They were born, or not 'till the Eighth Day, according to the Rule given in the Case of Circumcision? What has any Mention of the Lord's Supper to do here? Nothing: Nor is there any. The whole Passage appears plainly to relate to Baptism only. The Question was concerning Baptism only; and Baptism only is directly mentioned in the Answer: Not a Word of the Eucharist; unless Sanctificandum, the Word in Dispute, relates to it; which I can see no Reason to believe, nor have the least Doubt but that it relates to Baptism, the Word immediately preceding, and to which it is join'd. And it seems to be a far-fetched Construction, to render baptizandum & sanctificandum, by baptized, and sanctified in the Lord's Supper; when it so plainly means only, baptized, and sanctified in such Baptism.—Mr. PIERCE, in relating this Matter, says, that “One FIDUS a Bishop had, in a Letter
“to CYPRIAN, moved a Doubt, whether Infants should be
“baptized within two or three Days after They were born,
“or whether They ought not rather to be kept back from
“Baptism and the Lord's Supper 'till the Eighth Day,—as I
“understand Him,” says Mr. PIERCE†. But I cannot see any Reason He could have to understand Him of the Lord's Supper, when the Passage so evidently speaks of Baptism only; except it were to favour an Hypothesis, that CYPRIAN is herein an Evidence for the Necessity of Infant-Communion.

BUT Mr. PIERCE urges, that, waving all Arguments from this Passage of CYPRIAN; there is another Place in the same Epistle, which shews plainly, that FIDUS's Doubt, and the Synod's Determination, related as well to the Eucharist as to Baptism; and That is, where CYPRIAN mentions the Kiss of Peace as given to Infants‡; which being a Ceremony of the Eucharist, Mr. PIERCE would from thence infer, that CYPRIAN must be speaking of Infant-Communion.—But He was aware, that BELLARMIN, from this Epistle of CYPRIAN, and COTELERIUS from CHRYSOSTOM, and Mr. WALL, reckon This Kiss of Peace or Charity, among the Ceremonies of Baptism§: And if it was so, then CYPRIAN, notwithstanding His mentioning the Kiss of Peace, may still be speaking of Baptism only. Mr. PIERCE therefore, in order

* Vid. BINGHAM's Origin. Eccles. B. xi. c. iv. Sect. xii.---Vol. i. p. 482.

† Essay, p. 45.

‡ Ibid. p. 48.

§ Ibid. p. 49. Conf. BINGHAM's Orig. Eccles. B. xii. c. iv. Sect. v) —Vol. i. p. 542.

der to avoid the Force of This, tells us, that the mentioning the *Kiss of Peace* among the Ceremonies of *Baptism*, “ is easy “ to be accounted for by this one Observation; that anciently “ All *Baptized Persons*, whether *Infants* or *Adults*, used immediately to be admitted to the *Lord's Supper* *.” But This Answer is a Kind of *arguing in a Circle*.—— CYPRIAN (says He) must here speak of *Infant-Communion*; Because He mentions the *Kiss of Peace* given to *Infants*: And it must be meant that the *Kiss of Peace* was given to *Infants* at Their *Communion*; Because *Infant-Communion* was the ancient Practice.—— That *Infant-Communion* was the ancient Practice, was the *Question in Debate*: And Mr. PIERCE was to prove it from CYPRIAN's mentioning the *Kiss of Peace* given to *Infants*. But This, it seems, He cannot prove to be given to *Infants* at Their *Communion*, without the Observation that *Infant-Communion* was the *Ancient Practice*; that is, without supposing the very *Point to be proved*.

BUT there is a Sentence, in the Passage which Mr. PIERCE quotes from CYPRIAN, concerning the *Kiss of Peace*, which plainly shews that it could not relate to the *Eucharist*. In Answer to FIDUS, who had pleaded for deferring *Baptism* till the Eighth Day, because Children, at Their Birth, were *unclean*, and Every One abhorred to Kiss Them; CYPRIAN, among other Things, replies —— “ *Et si adhuc Infans à Partu novus est; non ita est tamen, ut Quisquam Illum in Gratia danda atque in Pace facienda exosculari horrere debeat* †.”—— Now, as Mr. PIERCE is pleased to say, that the *Kiss of Peace* is here mentioned as given to *Infants* at Their receiving the *Eucharist*, because They were admitted to *Communion* immediately after *Baptism*; which is Nothing more than *Petitio Principii*; I shall take Leave to say, that since, on the Contrary, Not one Instance can be produced in the Early Ages, where an *Infant* adhuc à Partu novus, just born, was ever admitted to the *Communion*; we have more Right to conclude, that therefore the *Kiss of Peace*, here mentioned as given to an *Infant* adhuc à Partu novus, just born, related not to *Infant-Communion*, but to *Infant-Baptism* only.—— To return now to Mr. DAILLE'.

He says, that almost All the Doctors of the First Ages believed that the *Eucharist* was necessary for *Infants*; and that

MALDONATE

* Essay, p. 49:

† CYPR. Epist. 59. aliàs 64. ad FIDUM,

MALDONATE has so observed, who tells us, that This Opinion remained in the Church for about 600 Years ||.

By the Manner in which He here cites MALDONATE, One would think He intended, by His Evidence, to carry This Doctrine, not only as high as St. CYPRIAN's Time; but, even to the *very Beginning* of the *Christian Church*. Yet the Learned have observed, that MALDONATE's Words require no such Meaning. The Passage of MALDONATE runs thus.—“ Missam facio Augustini & Innocentii Primi Sententiam quæ Sexcentos circiter Annos viguit in Ecclesia; “ Eucharistiam etiam Infantibus necessariam: *Maldonat.* in *Joan.* vi. 53. Which Words import no more, than that this Opinion remained in the Church, not for 600 Years *from the Beginning of the Church*; but, for 600 Years *from the Time of AUSTIN and INNOCENT I.* † Mr. DAILLE', in this Place, quotes only the *latter Part* of MALDONATE's Words.—Sexcentos circiter Annos viguit in Ecclesia, &c. Which looks as if He understood them of the *First 600 Years* of the Church; though He Himself, in another Place ‡, had cited the *whole Passage* as I have given it; which, by the Mention of AUSTIN's and INNOCENT's Opinion, sets the Matter clear; and shews the Meaning of MALDONATE to have been as here explained.

AND from This Observation it will appear, that there is not so wide a Difference as Mr. BINGHAM makes, between MALDONATE's Account and That of BONA. He observes that MALDONATE says, the Custom continued even in the *Roman Church for Six Centuries*: But that BONA makes it *double the Number*, who says, that it was not abrogated in *France* 'till the *XIIth Century* §.—Mr. BINGHAM seems to have thought, that MALDONATE meant, that the Custom continued in the Church for the *First 600 Years* from the *Beginning*: And then, since, according to BONA, it was not abrogated 'till the *XIIth Century*, BONA will indeed make it *double the Number*. But if MALDONATE only meant (as I have

|| Non est prætermittendum præter CYPRIANUM, AUGUSTINUM, INNOCENTIUM Papam I. Quorum Testimonia supra retulimus, pene Omnes Doctores priorum Seculorum credidisse Eucharistiam necessariam esse Infantibus, idque observasse MALDONATUM scribentem hanc Sententiam sexcentos circiter Annos viguisse in Ecclesia.---DALLÆI de Usu Patrum, &c. Lib. cap. iv. p. 293.

† WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. Part ii. c. ix. § 15.—Vol. 2. p. 436, 437.

‡ DALLÆI de Usu Patrum, &c. L. ii. c. viii. p. 176.

§ BINGHAM's Orig. Eccles. B. xv. c. iv. Sect. vii.—Vol. 1. p. 776,

I have before shewn it most probable He did) that the Custom continued in the Church for 600 Years *from the Time only of AUSTIN and INNOCENT*; about the Beginning of the Vth Century; Then, from thence to the XIIth Century, the Time to which BONA's Account brings it down, is about *seven or eight Centuries*; and so there will be, between Him and MALDONATE, the Difference only of a Century or two.

5. THE Decree of the Council of Trent on the Point of *Infant-Communion* having been mentioned upon this Occasion; I beg Leave to throw in a Word or two upon that Matter. They decree, that "Children, before the Use of Reason, are under *no Necessity* of communicating in the *Eucharist*. For, as They are, by the Laver of *Baptism*, regenerated and incorporated in Christ, They cannot, at that Age, lose the Grace They have obtained of being the *Children of God*. Yet *Antiquity* is not for that Reason to be condemned, if for some Time, and in some Places, They observed that Custom. For, as Those most Holy Fathers had a *probable Reason* for Their Practice, in Regard to the State of the Times They lived in; so, it is without *Dissimulate* to be believed, that They did not do it as being *necessary to Salvation* *." To which was joined an *Anathematism* "against Him who shall say, that the Communion of the *Eucharist* is *necessary* for *Children*, before the Use of Reason †."

IN this Decree, the Fathers of the *Trent-Council* declare, that the *Ancients* gave not the *Eucharist* to *Infants* out of any Opinion of it's *Necessity* to Their *Salvation*: And in this Account They are supposed to have been guilty of a *great Mistake* ‡. And when the Decrees of that Session were publish'd,

it

* Eadem Sancta Synodus docet, Parvulos Usu Rationis carentes nulla obligari Necessitate ad Sacramentalem Eucharistiæ Communionem. Si quidem per Baptismi Lavacrum regenerati & Christo incorporati adeptam jam Filiorum Dei Gratiā, in illa Ætate amittere non possunt. Neque ideo tamen damnanda est Antiquitas, si eum Morem in quibusdam Locis aliquando servavit. Ut enim Sanctissimi illi Patres sui Facti probabilem Causam pro illius Temporis Ratione habuerunt, ita certè Eos nulla Salutis Necessitate id fecisse, sine Controversia credendum est.—Synod. Trident. Sess. xxi. cap. iv.----Conf. PAUL's Hist. of the Council of Trent. B. vi. p. 503. Engl. Edit.

† Si quis dixerit Parvulis antequam ad Annos Discretionis pervenerint necessariam esse Eucharistiæ Communionem; anathema sit,----Ibid. Can. 4. Conf. PAUL's Hist. &c. Ibid.

‡ DALLÆI de Usu Patrum, &c. L. i. c. viii. p. 175, 176.

BINGHAM's Orig. Eccles. B. xv. c. iv. Sect. vii.

PIERCE's Essay, &c. p. 16.

it was much spoken of, that there should be an Obligation imposed to believe; that the Antients did not hold the *Communion of Children* to be necessary; when St. AUSTIN so often affirms the *Necessity of the Eucharist for Children*, and makes it even of equal *Necessity* with *Baptism*, alledging the Epistle of Pope INNOCENT who plainly so declares it*. Mr. WALL supposes the Truth to have been, that “the *Trent-Fathers* knew that some ancient *Doctors* had commended *Infants’ receiving*: But not that one of Their own *infallible Bishops* had so absolutely determined it to be necessary for Their *Salvation*†.” He means the before-mentioned Pope INNOCENT, in his Synodical Letter to the *Council of Milevis*.

BUT now, after all, the learned Reader, who considers what is said in the Tract here published, may perhaps be of Opinion, that the *Mistake* was not in the *Trent-Council*; but in *Those* who have hitherto thought, that the Antients *did* hold the *Necessity of Infant-Communion*.

Mr. WALL supposes, that the *Motives* of the *Trent-Council* for Their *Decree*, was the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, “which created an excessive, and superstitious Regard to the outward Elements of the Eucharist, and had, among others, this Effect; that, as the *Wine* was kept from the *Laymen* for Fear of *Slabbering*, so the whole *Sacrament* was from *Infants*‡.” But whatever Share This Motive might have in the *Decree*; if it now appears, that Their *Decree* was really *right*, let us allow that Their knowing it so to be, had likewise it’s Weight with Them.

Mr. PIERCE observes, that “there is Room for a strong Prejudice in Favour of *Infant-Communion*, because it was laid aside; and put down by the worst of Men, for the Sake of Their infamous Superstition and Idolatry§.” But if it be found that They really knew what They decreed to be true; it will be but common Charity to believe that *That* was, at least, One Inducement to it; however Their Superstition and Idolatry might be Another. And were Mr. PIERCE now alive, to see our Author’s Enquiry into the Antiquity of This Custom; He would, I dare say, no longer permit the *Prejudice* which the Character of the *Trent-Council* had occasioned in

* PAUL’s Hist. of the Council of *Trent*. B. vi. p. 504.

† WALL’s Hist. of *Infant-Baptism*. Part ii. c. ix. § 16.---Vol. ii. p. 445, 446.

‡ WALL’s Hist. of *Infant-Baptism*. Part ii. c. ix. § 16.---Vol. ii. p. 444.

§ Essay, p. 18.

In Him in Favour of Infant-Communion, to be any *Argument* with Him for reviving that Practice.

Mr. BINGHAM makes use of this Instance as an Argument against the “*Infallibility and unerring Tradition* in the Church “*of Rome, in Matters of Doctrine and necessary Practice; “since They Themselves have thought fit to alter one Point, “which Their infallible Popes and Forefathers for so many Ages “observed as necessary, in communicating Infants upon a Divine “Command *.”* But we want not sufficient Evidence against the *Infallibility* of Popes or Councils; though it be found true, that the Council of Trent has not erred in declaring, that the *Antients* did not communicate Infants as of Necessity to Their Salvation; nor, therefore, that That Council has altered any Point of ancient Doctrine, by decreeing that *Children*, before the Use of Reason, are under no Necessity of communicating in the Eucharist.

THOUGH the Character of the Trent-Council (or rather the Trent-Cabal, for it deserves no better Name) be sufficiently known, wherein all Things were carried by the Art and Stratagems of the Court of Rome; yet it would be hard, if, amongst such a Variety of Decrees, none of them should be right. There may be some Wheat amongst that Crop of Tares: And an impartial Judge will perhaps be of Opinion, that They have really told Truth in This Article, so generally hitherto taken to be false, viz. that None of the *Antients*, no not St. AUSTIN, who hath been thought to declare it in so many plain Passages of His Works, nor Pope INNOCENT, ever taught the Necessity of the outward Eucharist to the Salvation of baptized Infants.

6. Mr. PIERCE, in His Essay in Favour of the Practice of giving the Eucharist to Children, A. D. 1728, not only carries the Practice, and the Doctrine of it's Necessity, to AUSTIN's, INNOCENT's ||, and CYPRIAN's† Days; but even to the Time of the Apostles Themselves‡.

BUT This Notion is only mere Conjecture, without any Thing like a positive Proof. He does not pretend any Mention of such Practice before the Time of CYPRIAN. All His Reasons, upon which He would carry it higher, are Nothing more than doubtful Inferences, drawn from Principles which by no means necessarily infer what He would have them §.

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I HAVE

* Orig. Eccles. B. xv. c. iv. Sect. vii.---Vol. i. p. 777.

|| Essay Part i. § iii, iv. p. 8—31.

† Ibid. § vi. p. 35.

‡ Ibid. § viii. p. 53.

§ Essay. Part i. § viii. p. 53—75.

I HAVE thus represented the Opinions of the Learned concerning the *Antiquity* of the *Practice* of *Infant-Communion*, and the Doctrine of it's *Necessity*. It has been the *common Opinion*, that the *Custom* was begun as high as CYPRIAN's Time, about the Middle of the III^d Century; and practised in the Vth Century, on an Opinion of it's *Necessity to Salvation*, as taught by AUSTIN and INNOCENT.

THE Design of the Tract now published, is to shew that this *common Opinion* is a *Mistake*: that the *Early Ages* never gave the Communion to *mere Infants* (unless we except the Instance mentioned by CYPRIAN) but to *Children* of *ten*, or perhaps *seven* Years old: and That, not upon any Notion of it's *strict Necessity* to the *Salvation* of such *baptized Children*; but upon *prudential Reasons* only, or *general Reasons* of *Edification* pursuant to Christian Principles; such as move Us to bring Them to Church, training Them up in the Way They should go: Or, if founded upon stronger Motives, they were such as resolved into the then *present Expediency*, or superabundant Caution.

THE Necessity of Infant-Communion hath been so commonly believed to be the Doctrine of St. AUSTIN, in many (as they are supposed) plain Passages of His Writings ||, that it may seem strange for any One to attempt to prove the Contrary: And yet, an impartial and considerate Reader will, I believe, be satisfied, upon the Perusal of the Tract now published, that the learned Author hath given Reasons sufficient to make it appear; *First*, that St. AUSTIN could not, consistently with His constant and standing Doctrine of the *Sufficiency of Baptism* to the Salvation of Infants, teach the *Necessity* of the Communion over and above to *baptized Infants*; And, *Secondly*, that He did not really teach any such Doctrine; But that the Opinion of His having so done, is owing only to a *Misunderstanding* of His Principles and Writings.

HAVING dispatched St. AUSTIN, the principal Man, He proceeds to consider what may be urged likewise from INNOCENT I. MARIUS MERCATOR, FAUSTUS REIENSIS, GELASIUS, and particularly FULGENTIUS; All within less than 80 Years of St. AUSTIN: And These, He shews, are All to be interpreted by the same Rules by which He interprets St. AUSTIN, and to stand or fall with Him.

OUR

|| WALL's Hist. of Infant-Baptism. Part ii. c. ix. § 15.—Vol. ii. p. 441.

DALLÆI de Usu Patrum, &c. L. i. c. viii.—p. 175.

BINGHAM's Orig. Eccles. B. xv. c. iv. Sect. vii.—Vol. i. p. 775, 776.

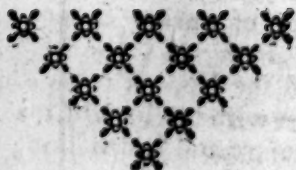
OUR Author having traced this Matter down from the Beginning of the Vth Century to the Beginning of the VIth, and shewn, that the *Necessity* of the *Eucharist* to *baptized Infants*, was never taught by Any of Those *Ancients* who have been produced for it in those Ages; He observes, that so the Matter rested till the *Close* of the VIIIth, or *Beginning* of the IXth Century. From That Time He dates the *first Rise* of the Doctrine of the *Strict Necessity* of *Infant-Communion*.— This is the Substance of what the Reader is to expect in the Tract now published on this Subject; where He will see the Whole drawn out in a full and clear Method, the Arguments enforced, and the Reasons supported, all along, by proper Authorities.

As the Author's Manuscripts were, by His Desire, committed to my Care, in Order for selecting and revising for the Press, such of them as should be thought most useful, and proper for the Public View; I have endeavoured to discharge the Trust reposed in Me, to the best of my Judgment and Abilities, and with all the Care which an Affair of that Consequence required.—— A Work I undertook with Pleasure, not only in Obedience to the Author's Request, but as having an Opportunity of paying thereby a small Tribute of Gratitude, to that Great and Good Man now in his Grave; at whose Feet I had the Honour to be educated; from whose Works, in common with the Rest of the World, I have received so much Pleasure and Instruction; and from that frequent, and improving Conversation in particular, to which (and I esteem it one of the happiest Advantages of my Life) He was pleased to admit Me, and to let Himself down to One so much His Inferior in Age, as well as in every other Respect.—— He was never *ostentatious* of displaying His Learning, *unasked*; but ever *willing* to afford *Instruction* to All who *enquired* of Him; and as *ready* to *communicate* His Store of Knowledge, as He was *indefatigable* in *collecting* it.—— His whole Life was spent (I might say *worn out*) in the Service and Advancement of Religion and Learning. He hath obliged the World with many valuable Effects of it; and, had He lived——! But He is now at Rest from His Labours.—Gone, to receive the Crown reserved for Those, who have *fought the good Fight*, have *finished Their Course*, and with *Fidelity discharged Their Trust*.——Gone, to enter into that *Joy*, which every *good and faithful Servant* is promised, who improves, and well employs the *Talents* committed to His Charge: while

the best Way for *Us*, whom He hath left behind, to *supply the Loss* We suffer by His *Death*, will be to *copy the Pattern* of His *Life*.

I HAVE Nothing more to acquaint the Public with ; but only to assure Them, that the Works now published are Printed from the Author's own Manuscripts, without any other Alteration, than what the Learned know to be necessary, in Papers which, at the Time of their being written, were not designed, nor afterwards fitted by the Author, for the Press.

March 4th,
1741-2.



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S E R M O N I.*

The Nature of Peaceableness, with the Foundation and Extent of its Obligations.

ROM. XII. 18.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.

THE Words I have now read making a distinct and entire Sentence of themselves, I need not observe any thing of their Connexion, or Coherence with what goes before, or after.

They are an Exhortation from the Mouth of an Apostle, to live peaceably with all Men, of whatever Nation or Religion, Sect or Profession, Quality or Condition: None are excepted. We are to live peaceably with All, on the Score of Humanity and Christian Charity. But then this is to be so only upon Supposition, that it is possible in the Nature of the thing, and also reasonable: That is, that we be not under any either Natural or Moral Incapacity of doing it: For then the Obligation must of course cease; not wholly and entirely, but in part, for we are still to endeavour to the utmost of

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* Preached at St. Mary's Church, July 21, 1713, at the Assizes held at Cambridge, before the Right Hon. the Lord Chief Baron Ward, and Mr. Justice Powis.

Published at the Request of Mr. High-Sheriff, and the Gentlemen of the Grand Jury.

our Power to live peaceably. *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

The Subject which this leads me to treat of will not, I hope, be thought foreign or unsuitable to the Time, the Place, or the Occasion. The Time; when having Peace with our Enemies abroad, we have need of the strictest Caution to be united in Affections at Home: The Place; the Honour and Prosperity whereof are very nearly concerned in the Offices of Peace and Love: The Occasion; the Design of which is, for the promoting of Peace and Order, for composing Dissensions, and healing of Differences in a Judicial Way; that we may the better *live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.* I shall therefore, without farther Preface, propose the following Method of Discourse.

I. I shall enquire what Obligations we lie under to Peaceableness with all Men, shew whereon they are Founded, and how far they Extend.

II. I shall consider the particular Duties and Offices implied in this Duty of Peaceableness, and therein give general Directions for a peaceable Conduct.

III. and *Lastly*, I shall apply the general Rules to some special Cases and Instances, particularly to That which the present Occasion offers to us.

First, I am to enquire what Obligations we lie under to Peaceableness with all Men, to shew whereon they are Founded, and how far they Extend.

Our Obligations to this Duty are very great and manifest. They are founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, are in some Sense antecedent to all Laws Human and Divine, and are bound upon us by both, because it was reasonable and necessary they should be so. They arise *immediately* from the mutual Relation we bear to each other, and the Capacity we are put into of promoting each others Happiness; and if we run them up to the Fountain and Foundation of all, *God blessed for ever*, we shall find that they flow more *remotely* from the unchangeable Perfections of his Nature, from his Wisdom and Goodness. When He was pleased to make such a Creature as Man, his Primary End and Design (excepting his own Glory which is coincident with it) was to make Him happy for ever with Himself in Heaven; and his Secondary was to make Him in some measure also happy here in this State of Probation. All his Laws Natural and Positive plainly center in these two, or rather Ultimately terminate in the former. From hence

hence spring all our Obligations to Peace and Amity, in as much as by the very Frame and Constitution of our Nature, and the Circumstances of our Being, they contribute greatly both to our Temporal and Eternal Happiness.

With regard to this Life, it is evident, that, had we no Contests or Quarrels with each other, the World would be a much more comfortable Place to live in, than now we find it: The Earth would be a Paradise compared to what it is, and Mankind happy beyond Expression. Men are born for Society, and designed for mutual Helps and Comforts to each other. Strifes and Debates, Anger, Wrath, Bitterness, are very pernicious and destructive, unnatural and irregular: They are the Disorders and Deviations of a depraved Nature from the original Rule, beside the primary Intent of the kind Author of our Beings. Private Families cannot prosper, nor even subsist long, when torn asunder by Heats and Animosities: Neither can a Kingdom stand when *divided against itself*, and crumbled into Sects and Parties. Even whole Nations, though united within themselves, if in a State of War with others, are *often* ruined thereby, and *always* lose much of that Prosperity and Plenty which they might otherwise enjoy. This shews the Necessity of our living friendly and peaceably, whether considered as private Men, or as Societies; our temporal Safety and Happiness, our Being and Well-Being are bound up in it.

As to another Life, the great Concern we have therein, and the apparent Necessity of the Means toward the desired End, oblige us yet more strictly to live Peaceably and Friendly with one another. For, How shall any Sense or Face of Religion be kept up amongst us, unless we agree and unite in one common Worship? How shall Decency, Order, and Regularity, be maintained without Peace and Unity? How shall Any have the Means of Instruction, or Improvement in Wisdom and Goodness, unless their Condition and Posture of Affairs give Freedom and Leisure for it; unless their Minds be calm and serene, their Thoughts easy and chearful, that is, unless they be at Peace with one another? Hatred and Revenge, Rancour and Malice eat out the very Vitals of Religion, estrange us mightily from God and Goodness, unqualify us for the Offices of Devotion and Piety, and render us very unfit for the Friendly and Peaceful Society of Heaven. I need not dwell long on so clear an Argument: Every one that thinks must be sensible that to live Peaceably is as necessary as it is to live and to be happy, to be easy and satisfied in this Life, and to be for ever blessed in Another. This

may be sufficient to show our Obligation to the Duty of Peaceableness and the Foundation of it. The next Consideration is concerning its Extent, which will be easily stated from the Principles laid down: And it is of great Importance to understand it rightly for the Regulation of our Practice in many intricate Cases.

The Extent of our Obligation to this Duty may be considered under a Twofold Respect, either

First, With Respect to the Obligation itself abstractedly, viz. the End and Design of it. Or,

Secondly, with Respect to our Power, Capacity, or Ability of discharging it.

For it can reach no farther in itself considered, than the End and Design of it; nor with regard to us, than we are capable of performing it.

1. As to the former, The great End and Design of all Laws which concern us, as I have before observed, is the present and future Happiness of Mankind. From hence They derive their Obligation, and from hence we must state their Measure. By the great Law of Charity founded hereupon, we are obliged to love all Men, and to do them Good: This always holds, and no Change of Circumstances whatever can make any Alteration in this general and highest Law. By the same Law of Charity we are likewise bound to *follow peace with all men*; because this is loving them and doing them good, generally speaking, as has been shewn. But yet in this, which is only a Secondary and subordinate Law, different Circumstances may cause some Variety, and make some Abatement. It can oblige no farther than the Reason of it holds, that is, no farther than it tends to the Glory of God, and the Good of Men. We may, nay we ought, at any Time, to break Peace in order to some greater Good; and so the same Law of Charity which binds to Peace generally, obliges to the contrary in different Circumstances. If by disobliging and offending some Persons we can do them the greater Kindness; if we can reform and save them, or however can promote the public Happiness by disturbing their present Peace more than by leaving them quiet, easy, and unmolested; then Considerations of Peace so far cease, as they are inconsistent with Piety and Charity. I chuse rather thus to state the Measure of our Obligation to Peace, than to say, as is commonly said, that in all Things lawful we are to comply, or that we must never sin against God, for the sake of Peace. For though
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that be always a true, and generally a safe Rule to go by, yet it is neither so full, nor so clear as it should be, nor does it go deep enough into the Case before us. *That we must not sin against God for the sake of peace*, is no more than to say, that we must never sin on any Consideration whatsoever; which is very true, and the contrary would be absurd: But still, the great question of all remains undecided, namely, when it is a Sin or no Sin, when lawful or unlawful, to offend against Peace: And this can only be determined in many Cases by considering which is the greater Good, or which the greater Charity, to leave Men easy and quiet, or to molest and disturb them in such particular Circumstances. To clear this by an Instance; It is a Precept of Scripture to *rebuke them that sin before all*, and yet we are commanded to *follow peace with all men*; which two Precepts may in some Cases seem to clash with each other. There may be Danger of committing a Sin either Way, as Circumstances may happen: Against the Precept of Peace, by rebuking; against the other Precept, by not doing it. Here if we apply the Rule, that *we are not to sin for the sake of Peace*; it is as true on the other hand, that *we are not to sin against Peace*: And so we are left in an Uncertainty. But since the End of both Precepts is Charity; if we can know in such particular Circumstances which is the greater Good, or greater Charity, to do *this* or *that*, we may then determine what to do; and upon this Consideration seems to depend the whole Case, whether it be a Sin or a Duty to rebuke Offenders in such and such Instances. For if it be a greater Charity to do it than not, it ought to be done, and not else. Thus, separating and dividing from any particular Church is breaking the Church's Peace; yet if that Church be corrupted and unsound in its Doctrines, it is Charity to them, to others, to ourselves, to *protest* against them first, and afterwards to break off from them. For it is for the good of Mankind here and hereafter, that Truth be defended against Error; Purity of Faith against Corruptions; true and undefiled Religion against Idolatry and Superstition. So again, if common Swearers, Drunkards, Atheists, and Libertines go on quietly and undisturbedly in their Vices, it is breaking the Peace with them to rebuke, censure, or chastise them. Yet this, if done as it should be, is kind to them, to us, to all; and, though a breach of Peace, is no breach of Charity. Hence a Magistrate in the Execution of Justice, or a Minister in the Discharge of his Function, must venture to disoblige any Man, or any Body of Men, whatsoever be the Consequence of it:

because it cannot be so bad as that of suffering Men to go uncontrouled in their Wickedness, and to sleep securely in their Vices. The Apostles of our Lord did by their Preaching occasion many Tumults and Disturbances, and were censured as Men that had *turned the world upside down*,† by reason of the Riots and Confusions which were every where raised upon their Coming: yet what they did was for the everlasting Benefit of Mankind, and therefore of far greater Moment than a short and false Peace. If they had resolved to offend nobody, but to have lived peaceably and quietly in a strict sense, Paganism and Idolatry had remained still, and Christianity had made small Progress in the World. But this would have been valuing Peace against the very End and Design of it; and betraying the Cause of Christ to the ruin of their own and other Men's Souls. Our blessed Saviour, the *Prince of Peace*, had forewarned them of this long before. *Think not, says He, that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*‡ This was no Fault of his Religion, which was as well peaceable as pure; but of the Men of the World, who through Pride and Envy, and other Lusts, made the worst Use of the kindest and best Designs. Our blessed Lord himself had many Contests and warm Disputes with the Scribes and Pharisees, which He might easily have avoided, if his Concern for God's Honour, and for the Good of Men, had not obliged Him to engage in them. It is manifest therefore that we ought not, and in Reason cannot seek Peace any otherwise, than in regard, and in Subordination to the general End and Design of it, the Glory of God, and the Happiness, present and future, of Mankind. So much for the Extent of the Obligation to the Duty of Peaceableness with respect to the End and Design of it.

2. We may consider it with respect to our Ability, Power or Capacity, natural and moral, of discharging it. So far as is possible, and so far as lieth in us.

That it is sometimes possible to live peaceably with all men, I think the words of the Text plainly suppose; as also, that it is not so always. It is possible for a Man of a sweet Temper and prudent Conduct, in a private Station, having few Concerns in the World, to have the Love and good Word of All that know Him, and to live many Years without so much as

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† Acts xvii. 6. ‡ Mat. x. 34, 35, 36.

a Controversy or Difference with any. But this is the Case perhaps of very few, and the Instances of it are but seldom; and when they are, are hardly seen or observed. Generally speaking, it is not possible for any Man, at all Times, and in all Circumstances, to *live peaceably with all men*.

The wisest and best of Men have their Failings and Imperfections. They cannot manage so nicely and equally, at all Times, as never to speak a foolish Word, or never to do a foolish Thing. Troubles and Afflictions will sometimes sower their Tempers: Passions will break out and disturb their Reason; and some degree of Partiality arising from Self-Love will cloud their Understandings. A sudden Heat will transport them; an unexpected Accident surprize them. Or, if no such Case happens, yet Doubts and Perplexities will arise in Matters of Difficulty, and mingle with their wisest and coolest Reasonings. Hence, unless their Prudence be very extraordinary, and their Caution more than human, some Mistake will creep in, some Offence be committed, a Quarrel ensue, and for some time at least they'll not *live peaceably with all Men*. Into some such Principle as This we must resolve the warm Debates, eager Disputes, and at length open Breaches between very wise and good Men; as between St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and some others. Such Instances are not to be drawn into Examples, but they may serve to very good Use when applied to the purposes of Humility. They may show us what we are at best, and may awaken our Caution, considering what Infirmities we carry about with us; and that neither the dearest of Friends, nor the best of Men can be infallibly secure of their own Temper and Conduct, but may transgress sometimes, either giving or taking needless Offence, and falling out with each other.

But were this the worst of the Case, or had good Men none to deal with but such as themselves, they might, and would, for the most part, live very peaceably; their Differences would be few, and those soon ended and amicably composed. But they are obliged to live in a wicked World, which will industriously labour to molest and grieve them: and, notwithstanding their best Endeavours to be kind and friendly, will find, or make some Occasion of Quarrel with them. The Humours and Follies of Mankind are so many and various, their Capacities so different, and their Opinions and Taste of Things so unlike, and even contrary to each other; that it is often impossible in the Nature of the Thing to please all, or not to offend some, however accurate and careful we be in our Conduct. What Fence can there be against the Ignorance and

Stupidity of one who cannot, or against the Prejudice and Perverseness of another; who will not understand the Good-will we bear Him, nor distinguish between Love and Hatred, between Good and Evil? How shall a Man guard against the Misconstructions of Envy; the ill Effects of the Spleen; the Designs of Ambition and Self-Interest; or the Extravagances of Pride? How shall He escape, if one shall injure Him out of Covetousness; and because He has injured Him, hate Him, and take all Occasions of destroying Him? How shall He be at Peace, if Some be angry with him for being richer, Others for being wiser, and Others for being better than Themselves? Or, to name no more, How shall He steer between two contending Parties, where He can neither be neuter, nor comply with either without offending one or both? I mention not the cursed Practices of Incendiaries, who, out of set Purpose and Design, study to set Men at Variance by Whispers and Rumours, by Insinuations and Forgeries, by aggravating Circumstances that are, and feigning those that are not. These, and many other Considerations, may hinder the wisest and coolest of Men from living peaceably with all Men.

Add to this, what has been before hinted, that if it were possible, in the Nature of the Thing, by yielding and complying, to please all Men; yet we cannot in Reason and Conscience, as Men, or as Christians, comply any farther than is reasonable, equitable and pious. If therefore any will be so unjust (and many such there will be) as to refuse to be on any Terms of Peace with us, unless we violate our Consciences and sin against God; if they expect to be applauded and encouraged in their fond Humours and Passions; to be caressed in their Vices, gratified in their Lusts and Vanities, and to be soothed and flattered to their own Destruction; if they will not be Friends with us unless we say as they say, and do as they do, and come into their Schemes, however unjustifiable and unreasonable, wicked or impious; if these or such like Conditions and Articles of Peace be imposed, and rigorously exacted of us, How shall we contrive to live peaceably with all Men? And yet He must have been very happy indeed in his Company, who has not often met with such Cases, or does not meet with them almost every day, if he be one of much Business, and of a large and general Acquaintance. From all which it appears, how impossible it is, even for the Best of Men, at all Times, and in all Circumstances, to *live peaceably with all Men*. Yet notwithstanding, we are to use our sincere Endeavours to do what we can; and no Pretence whatever can excuse

excuse us from doing *as much as lieth in us, towards living peaceably with all Men.* What this is I am now to consider under my second general Head, which is

II. To shew the particular Duties and Offices implied in the Duty of Peaceableness, and therein to lay down Rules and Directions for a peaceable Conduct.

The Duty of living peaceably is of so large and comprehensive a Nature, and implies so many Particulars, that it were endless almost to enter into the Detail of them. They may be referred to two general Heads, the first relating to the *inward Temper*, the Second to the *outward Carriage*.

1. As to the *inward Temper* of Mind, two Things are requisite. One, that a Man be free from unruly Appetites, Lusts and Passions; the Other, that he be endowed with a large and diffusive Charity, having a tender Concern for the present and future Welfare of Mankind.

1st. The peaceable Man must in the first place be free from the Dominion of unruly Appetites, Lusts and Passions. He must suppress Envy, curb the Excesses of Self-Love, and above all Things labour to mortify and bring down his Pride. Every Lust, Passion, or inordinate Affection tends to create Discord, and to sow Dissension. *From whence come Wars and Fightings amongst you, saith St. James: come they not hence, even of your Lusts?*† From Lust of Pleasure, which is Sensuality; from Lust of Riches, which is Covetousness; from Lust of Power and Greatness, which is Ambition or Pride, the strongest and most contentious of any. *By pride only, says the Wise Man, cometh contentions;* meaning chiefly or principally. It is the Pride of the Heart which commonly begins and carries on a Quarrel, and blows it up to the height: not but that Envy, Malice, Hatred, and other vile Affections have a hand in most Differences; but Pride goes along with all, and helps to inflame them. This is that Root of Bitterness which lies deep in our Nature, which seems in a manner to be born and bred up with us; which, like Poison, spreads itself through Men of all Ranks and Orders; which, of all other Vices and Follies, is the greatest, and commonest; and of which Every one almost, more or less, has a Share. It is one of the first Things that we take up, and the last which we lay aside. Easy it is to be infected with it, hard to discover it, and yet harder to cure it. Special care therefore must be taken to find out this lurking Viper in our Bosoms, and

† Jam. iv. 1.

§ Prov. xiii. 10.

to cast it far from us. There can be no Peace where This reigns. There will be Strife, Bitterness, and perpetual Feuds, wherever Persons of proud and haughty Spirits meet. The peaceable Man then must have a Mind clear of all Lusts and inordinate Affections; but especially of Pride, *the Devil's Sin*, which made War in *Heaven*, and does the like on *Earth*, and will for-ever foment the Discord, and fill up the Misery of *Hell*.

2. Besides this negative Disposition in order to Peace, a Man must farther be endowed with a large diffusive Charity, having a tender Love and Concern for Mankind. This will both incline him to Peaceableness, and also fix its due Bounds and Measures, as before hinted. This will prevent his engaging as Party in any Contests, excepting only such as are for the Glory of God, and the Good of Men. One of this Principle will have no Quarrel with the *Men*, but with their *Vices*, no Hatred to *Them*, but to their *Faults*. He will never commence a Difference, but with Reluctance; nor carry it on, but with Justice; nor let it end, but in Charity. He will not lengthen it beyond what is reasonable and necessary; nor push Matters to Extremities, but rather drop the Contest than exceed in it. He will first consider, what Good may be done by it, and next by what fair Methods it may most easily and speedily be attained. In fine, a Lover of Mankind will be meek and gentle, courteous and affable, just, humble, and merciful, which are all amiable Qualities, and make for Peace; contributing to the Beginning, the Growth and the Perfection of it. Having thus briefly considered what is implied in a peaceable Temper, I come next to show,

2. Wherein consists a peaceable *Carriage*. This is the Superstructure, whereof the other is the Foundation. If *That* be well laid, *This* will easily be built upon it, and requires only Prudence to compleat it. It consists of many Particulars, as well as the Former, which may, I think, be reduced to these three Heads.

1. That we give no needless Offence.
2. That we take none.
3. That, when any has been either given, or taken, we put a Stop to it as soon as may be. The Two first are necessary for the preventing of Differences; the Last for composing them: which though it be needful only upon some Failure in the Former, yet will be needful enough, and what we shall frequently have Occasion for.

1. I say,

1. I say, The Man of a peaceable Carriage must be cautious not to *give Offence* when needless, or, when it may innocently be spared. This implies that he be careful to injure no Man's Person by unjust Violence; nor his Reputation by Reviling or Slander; nor his outward Condition and Circumstances by Deceit, Fraud, or Circumvention. And this is the lowest, though not the smallest Part of a peaceable Man's Character. Farther, all Arrogance, Rudeness and Boasting are hereby condemned as Enemies to Peace. To which Head may be referred the being too assuming, and forward in giving Opinion or Advice, intruding into Things above him, or that do not belong to him, and being too hasty in Reproofs, or too severe, at improper Times, or to improper Persons. To this we may add, that He should use great Compliance and Condescension in all Matters indifferent, readily agreeing to every innocent Usage, Custom, Fashion, or Ceremony of the Age, or the Place He lives in: not affecting to be wiser in little things than Others his Contemporaries, or those before him; not to distinguish Himself by Singularities of Behaviour, or other Niceties of small Consideration. In a word, in all Matters of Liberty He ought to yield and comply, avoiding the Extremes of Moroseness, Rigour, and Severity. If a Superior, not to strain Authority too high, not to carry it too far, nor to chuse to effect by Threats and Menaces what may better be compassed by milder and gentler Methods. If an Inferior, not to insist on every Nicety of Privilege, nor rudely to reflect on, and censure Authority; not to dispute any Point beyond what is just, decent, and modest; nor to be too severe in exposing the Failings, and prying into the real or imaginary Mistakes of his Governors. If an Equal, not to affect a Superiority in Place, nor to be too critically exact in weighing his own Pretences and Merits; but to be complaisant and yielding in Matters of Ceremony and Respect; in Honour preferring others before him; and in any doubtful Case, rather receding from what might strictly be his Right, than insisting so far upon it as to endanger his Charity. These, and the like Measures of Conduct are very requisite, if we would live so as to give no Offence to Any.

2. Another Part of the peaceable Man's Character is, not to *take Offence*; especially in small Matters, which are hardly worth a wise Man's Notice. This perhaps is a harder Task, than the Former. Many are cautious enough as to the Matter of *giving* an Affront, who yet know not how to *take* one; the Reason of which seems to be this, that civil or genteel Carriage,

Carriage, or a Carefulness to offend no Man, is creditable and reputable, and many would use it for that single Reason; but to pass by an Offence, or to bear an Injury however slight and trivial, according to the foolish Maxims of the World is thought a Disparagement; and so bears hard upon any Man who has not a very good Sense of Things, or has not conquered his Pride: And hence perhaps it is, that Many who would not willingly be the first Occasion of a Quarrel, yet come easily into one upon a slight Provocation. This is certainly a great Fault, and what should carefully be avoided by Him that would *live peaceably with all men*. We are to bear one another's Infirmities, and to pass by each other's Failings. There can be no Peace without this in such a World as ours is. The Case is plainly thus; The Generality of Mankind will never be wise enough, nor good enough to carry on an innocent, inoffensive, and unblameable Conversation. Some Flaw or other in their Humour and Conduct will discover itself frequently, which a good Man will pass over, thinking it a greater Fault to resent such Matters than to offend by them. Some will be foolish and inconsiderate in Discourse, rash and bold in their Censures, rude and unmannerly in their Reflections; Others will be as disobliging in Behaviour, not paying the Respect which is justly due, nor observing a Decency, or any Rules of *Decorum*. These and a thousand other such petty Affronts and Injuries a Man must expect to meet with, who converses much in the World. And what should He do in such Cases? Would it not be a vain and foolish Thing to resent such Trifles? Can there be any End of Differences if this be done? Is it not much better to pity and pardon all such slight and trivial Provocations? Can all Men be wise? Will ever all Men be good? Should we not make Allowances for Education, for Temper, for Custom, for Frailty? Have we not All our Passions and Infirmities, our Humours, our Follies, which cannot perfectly be cured? We may as soon alter some Men's Complexions and Features, as make them change their Humour or Manner. And perhaps something there is in most Men particular to them, which they are tenacious of; and They have as much Right to be so, as Others have to censure them for it. In these and the like Cases we are to remember the Apostle's Rule, to bear the Infirmities of the Weak; and tho' they are neither so wise, nor even so good as they should be, yet to have Patience with them, and not to make them worse by indiscreet and rigorous Proceedings. If any are too eager and passionate, give them Time to cool, and consider farther:

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If they are stiff and untractable, wait till they may soften, and become more pliable: If they are prejudiced and prepossessed, have Patience with them till their Understanding may clear up, and Years may wear out their Prejudices: Instruction and gentle Usage may help towards it, when Opposition and Severity would but rivet them the closer, and harden them the more in them. Let not any Man be offended at a few foolish Words, or a disrespectful Look or Gesture. A Lover of Peace will have so much Good-nature as to impute them rather to the Indiscretion than Ill-will of the Offender; and so much Charity as to forgive such slight Trespasses, though really designed and proceeding from some Grudge and Hatred. Nay though reproached and reviled in some grievous Manner, He will pity the Offender, despise the Malice, and return Good for Evil; as a kind Physician, when he finds his Patient disordered and raving, is not angry with him, but pities him the more, and takes the more Pains to heal him. There is nothing in this Procedure but what is just, equitable, and christian. If all Men cannot be wise, let Those that can, be so both for Themselves and Others, and supply their want of Good-nature and Prudence by the Abundance of their own. Most Quarrels might be prevented by a discreet Management on either Side; as the sending of a Challenge would make no Duel, were there none to accept it. There are few People so untractable but may be kept in Temper by a wise Management. Sometimes their Passions may be suffered to spend themselves; and then it is only waiting a while, and They are calm. At other Times a soft Answer may pacify them, or a Smile divert them, or a seeming Compliance, or some obliging Courtesy disarm them. Thus the Sallies of Ill-Nature or Peevishness, like some jarring Notes, may, by a skilful Hand, be so artfully set and plaid, as not to hinder the Harmony of Society, but sometimes to make it even the sweeter. If Any ask how far we ought to carry our Compliance, and what Sorts of Affronts or Injuries, or how many, we should thus bear with; the Answer may be understood from the Measures laid down above. We are to consider in those Cases, whether we can do more Good to the World, or more Honour to God by resenting and taking notice of any Injury, than by passing it by: and upon this are to determine what to do. And if we lay aside Prejudice and Passion, and listen to our Reason only, it will not be difficult to know how we ought to steer in Cases of this Nature. We are to remember that such Reasons as these, *We are Injured, we are provoked, or, the Man deserves to be punished,* and the like,

like, are no sufficient Reasons of Resentment to wise or good Men. But if They can do more Good by resenting the Offence, and punishing the Offender than otherwise, then They not only may, but ought to do it. And so much for the second Rule of peaceable Conduct in order to prevent needless Quarrels.

3. The third is in order to compose them: That if any needless Offence has been either given or taken, that we endeavour to put a Stop to it as soon as may be. If a Difference is already begun, stifle it in the Birth, and suffer it not to proceed farther. This implies a Willingness and Readiness to acknowledge and confess any Mistake committed by Chance, by Indiscretion, by Passion, or Frailty; to ask Pardon for it, and to offer any reasonable Satisfaction in order to Reconciliation. A peaceable Man in this Case will not think it below him to own his Fault, though it be to an Equal or to an Inferior, nor to make the first Step toward Reconciliation. He will rather exceed than come short in his Reparation for it, and will chuse with *Zaccheus* rather to restore fourfold for any Injury done, than to continue it, or defend it. There are some proud and haughty Spirits who will never own themselves to have committed a Fault, but are sure to make the Thing much worse by pretending to justify it. What was at first perhaps but an Indiscretion is hereby made their Crime: And they are much more unjust in defending what they have done, than at first in doing it. The Foundation of all this is Pride and Folly; and it is hard to say whether such Conduct be more injurious or more foolish, or whether it makes a Man more hated or despised. Be it which it will, a Lover of Peace will abhor such Practices, and will neither be afraid nor ashamed to own that he has done amiss, and to ask Pardon for it. This is a Point of good Breeding and Civility, as well as of Justice and Charity. And considering our sundry Failings and Infirmities, and how in many Things, in this Sense also, *we offend all*, it is so necessary a Point of christian and peaceable Conduct, that there could be no easy and quiet living in the World without it. Having thus shewn in the general, what we may and ought to do in order to *live peaceably with all men*, give me leave now only, in the

III. Third and last place, to apply the general Rules to some special Cases and Instances, particularly to what the present Occasion offers to us. Our Differences with one another are commonly of Three Sorts; Religious, Political, and Personal. The first about Religion, the second about
Matters

Matters of State, the third about *Meum* and *Tuum*, or some Rights and Privileges between Man and Man.

1. As to Religious Differences, they are generally the fiercest, and last the longest, and are of fatal Consequence to Peace and Happiness: And therefore certainly ought, as much as in us lies, to be prevented or composed by us. I will not take upon me to say what our Governors in Church or State might, or should, do in order to it: They have done a great deal, and they may perhaps do more, when Affairs are more settled, and Men's Passions cool, and Times more favourable for it. What concerns us as Private Men, is, so to defend our Religion, and to maintain the true Faith and Worship, by Discourse or Writing, as not to lose our Charity. Religion is a Cause that deserves our Zeal; and if Many will be offended with us for telling them the Truth, and not complying with such Errors as would lead both to their and our Destruction, the Fault is their own: We should still, as much as lieth in us, *live peaceably* with them. Not by betraying the Cause of Christ, not by ceasing to *contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints*, not by pleading for Amendments and Alterations in the purest and best constituted Church of any in the World; but by condescending to hearken to and answer any modest Scruples, by Meekness and Gentleness, by Patience and Forbearance, *not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing*. This is as much as in us lies as Private Persons, towards living peaceably with them that dissent from us. Something more lies in *them*, who have no unlawful Terms of Communion imposed, and therefore might and should give up their Prejudices, and submit to lawful Authority, and wholesome Order for the Church's Peace. However, considering the prevailing Biases, which Education, Custom, and Prejudice lay upon weak Minds, especially when they have neither Leisure nor Capacity to know better; and considering that mild and gentle Usage, may possibly win Some over, whom Reviling and Rudeness would but harden and render worse; it is certainly a Christian Duty not to upbraid and provoke Them, not to be bitter against Them, but rather to wait with Patience till God may open their Eyes, or turn their Hearts: To whose Mercy we should therefore leave them, and in the mean while take care of our own Souls. But,

2. Another Sort of Differences, near as fatal as the former, and in some respects more so, are those among ourselves, of the same Church and Interest, our *Party-Differences*. How have

have these sower'd Men's Tempers, inflamed their Passions, and almost eaten out the Heart of christian Charity! I have not Time, nor Words to lament the visible Decay of Religion and Piety owing to those Heats and Animosities so rise amongst us: The whole Nation feels it, and every good Man mourns in secret for it. We shall not, I am afraid, find that these eager Contests are founded either in a true Love for our own Country, in particular, or for Mankind in general; or that our Zeal arises from a real Concern for Truth, for Justice, or for Charity. What Truth is there in applauding or condemning at all Adventures, as well Persons as Things, as they are for or against one Side? What Justice in reviling and abusing one another with odious Distinctions, and drawing peaceable Men into one side or other, even against their Wills, and then fixing a black Character upon them? What Charity in hating and reviling great Numbers before we know them; making all Merit, in a manner, consist in I know not what Names, confounding the Distinctions of Praise and Dispraise, Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil? But I shall urge this no farther, considering how tender a Point I am now upon; and that tho' it most of all deserves Censure, yet perhaps can least bear it. I shall but just offer a hint or two to well-disposed Persons in relation to their Conduct, that they may not foment or increase those Differences which they cannot cure. The best Way certainly for private Men, is to be as little concerned in those Disputes as may be; to leave the Government, and the Affairs of it quietly and contentedly in the Hands wherein God has placed them; to be modest and candid in their Censures of, submissive and courteous in their Carriage to, All without Distinction: To let angry Men enjoy their own Opinions; and instead of employing their Time and Thoughts about Matters, which tend only to stir up their Passions, and cannot profit them, to mind their own Business; and above all, to mind *the one thing needful*, which is so seldom thought of amidst all our Heats and Contests, if not about Trifles, yet Trifles in Comparison. While we are engaging with such Warmth and Eagerness about the Affairs of this Life, it might abate our Fervor to consider how little a Time we have to sojourn here, and how great a Work we have upon our Hands; and of what Moment it is to go cool and quiet hence, if ever we hope to find a Place within the calm and peaceful Mansions of the Blessed.

3. and Lastly, A Word or two about private Differences between Man and Man, and then I shall have done. These
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are many and various, and would be of dangerous Consequence to the Public, were it not that under a wise and good Government, when gentler Methods fail, they may at length be Judicially and Authoritatively determined. This is the best human Means to keep a wicked World in Order: It secures in a great Measure the outward Peace of Society, and makes some Amends for the want of universal Justice and Charity. Were the Rules, before given, universally received and practised, there would be less Occasion for Judicial Proceedings; but since this is a Happiness not to be expected on this Side Heaven, and that as the World is now, there could be no comfortable living without Courts of Justice, we may be highly thankful, that in a Case of so great Necessity, we have so good a Remedy. A peaceable Man however will yet be tender of having Recourse to a Method, that is designed only as a Reserve for the last Extremity. He will bear some time, and suffer Wrong; pass by little Trespasses, and overlook some Injuries; rather than bring Trouble and Expence upon, and occasion Ill-Blood amongst his Neighbours. Small Damages may be sustained, and even greater Losses may be repaired, but it is hard ever to repair a Breach of Charity. He will therefore, though the Cause be weighty and considerable, try all gentle Methods first to win over an Adversary; and if Matters can thus be amicably adjusted, and the Point secured, He obtains his Right and keeps a Friend at the same Time, and neither endangers his own, nor Another's Charity. If, after all, the fairest Offers of Accommodation be rejected, and He must submit to a smaller Evil to prevent a greater; He will still remember to proceed as becomes a Man, and a Christian; With no Hatred and Revenge towards his Adversary, with no Railing and Bitterness, but with an upright Intention, and a calm and sedate Temper of Mind. He will use none but fair and just Methods; will suborn no Witnesses; nor attempt to practise upon Juries; will not disguise the real Truth, nor act against it; will seek Justice only, and abide by it. And when at length his Cause shall be decided by a competent Authority, though it should happen to be against him, He will patiently and readily submit to it, and not take upon him to censure the Proceedings of the Court, or to be wiser than his Judges. Or if Sentence shall be given in favour of him, He will not insult or triumph over his Adversary, but be willing and ready ever after to do him any good Offices, and to live in entire Peace and Friendship with him. With these Cautions, and with this Temper, *Christians* may go to Law with *Christians* and be blameless. Yet I must observe, that however one of the contending Parties may be of this Temper, yet it rarely, or perhaps never happens that

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Both are so. For if Neither desire any thing but what is Fair and Honest; if they are Both willing to comply with any peaceable Measures, and are in perfect Charity with each other; it is hard to imagine how any Quarrel can arise between them, or however proceed so far as to a Judicial Hearing. There seems to be but one Case where this can happen: And that is, when the Matter of Controversy is very intricate and perplexed, and the Reasons seemingly equal on both Sides. Here Both may amicably consent to refer the Matter to a *Legal Tryal*, and so finally determine it. And yet even in this Case, there is another more friendly and less expensive Way, which may do as well; and that is taking private Counsel of Men learned in the Law, and submitting to an *Arbitration*. But enough of this.

Having thus briefly endeavoured to lay down the Rules and Measures of a peaceable Conduct both General and Special; I shall now close all with a Consideration or two, to induce us to the Observance of them. We are born into a World, where there is no such Thing as Joy, Comfort or Security, but in Peace and Unity. Histories of Times past may inform us, Reason may persuade us, or Experience convince us, that Divisions are always destructive and pernicious, are the Presages and Causes of approaching Ruin; and however some may take delight in them for a Time, who were the first Authors of them, yet at length they fall heavy on their own Heads, and are fatal to themselves. None are Gainers hereby at last, but the common Enemy of Mankind; whose Business it is to set us at Variance with each other, that he may the sooner, and the more effectually destroy All. Consider farther, that we are sent into this Life in order to a better, and are here only in a State of Tryal and Probation. While we are striving and contending with each other about Trifles, the great Business of Religion is almost at a Stand, and nothing in a Manner done to prepare for Eternity. Life is short, Time wears away, and Death approaches, and all our great Matters are to come hereafter. A few Years must end our petty Differences: We must sleep in the Dust together, and within a while awake to Judgment. Then what Profit shall we find in all those vain Janglings and Contentions with each other: Begun in Folly, nursed up by Pride, and at length ending in Misery. Eternal Misery? May these and the like Considerations serve to moderate our Heats, and teach us to put away from us all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice; to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as we hope that God for Christ's sake may forgive us.

SERMON

S E R M O N II.

The Duty of loving our Neighbour as Ourselves,
explained.

MATTHEW XXII. 39.

The Second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self.

THE whole Sentence, or Context runs thus: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart—and so on; This is the first and great Commandment; And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self: On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* My present Concern is with the Commandment *to love our Neighbour*, which is a Duty second, and similar to That of the *Love of God*. It is *Second* only, or *subordinate* to the *First*, and therefore not of *equal Rank, Order, Dignity, or Obligation*, with it: But still because it is *second* to It, and *like it*, it is also of *high Rank, Order, Dignity, and Obligation*, and only short of the *highest* Commandment of all, in which both This and every other Commandment, or Duty centers. There is This Honour done even to the *Second* Commandment, though it resolves into the *First*, that it is here represented as one of the Two main Beams upon which all other Duties hang: Not that any Thing really hangs upon the *Second*, which hangs not on the *First* also (for the *Second* depends upon the *First*) but this *Second* is so considerable both in Value and Extent, that our Lord was pleased to place it in That distinct View, and to set it in That honourable Light, in order to recommend it the more strongly to the Attention and Affection of the Hearers. On These two Commandments hang all the Rest: Every Duty is summed up and comprized in the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*. There are some *Self-duties*, which may be thought to make a *Third* chief Head;

and Divines have frequently branched out the several Duties incumbent upon us, into our *Duty to God*, and our *Duty towards our Neighbour*, and our *Duty towards Ourselves*. Neither is that *Threefold Distinction* without its Use, for the Help of the Memory, or for clearing our Conceptions. Nevertheless it is very certain that even Those *Self-duties* do, in some View or other, hang upon Both the other: For Temperance and Chastity, and other the like *Self-duties*, shew our Obedience towards God, and render us the more beneficial to Men; and therefore do resolve at length into the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*: So true is it, universally, that upon *These Two* Commandments hang all the Rest.

These few general Things premised, for the clearer understanding what our Lord was pleased to take notice of, as common to them Both; I now proceed more distinctly to what properly concerns the *Second* of the Two: *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self*. It is not said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour with *all thy Heart*, and with *all thy Soul*, and with *all thy Strength*: No, That would have been carrying the Point too high, and scarce have left any sufficient Note of Distinction between what we owe to *Man*, and what we owe to *God* only. But it is said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour *as thy Self*; which is high enough, and is both an awakening and an affecting Description of the Love enjoined, as shall be shewn in the Sequel. In discoursing farther, it will be proper,

- I. To shew what *Neighbour*, in the Text, means.
- II. To explain what it is to *love* one's Neighbour as one's *Self*.
- III. To lay down some Considerations, proper to enforce the Duty here enjoined.

I.

The Word *Neighbour* primarily and properly signifies One that is situated near unto us, or One that dwelleth nigh us. But by Use and Custom of Language, the same Word *Neighbour* has been made to signify One that we are any Way allied to, however distant in Place, or however removed from the Sphere of our Conversation or Acquaintance. When a certain *Lawyer*, a *Jew* by Nation and Religion, insidiously put

put this Question to our Lord, *Who is my Neighbour?* Our Lord replied to Him in the Way of a Parable, representing a Case to Him, and then leaving it to his own good Sense to answer the Question, which Himself had raised. An unhappy Man had fallen among Robbers, and was left upon the Road stripped, and wounded, and half-dead. A *Jewish Priest* came by, and took no Notice of so pitiable a Case: A *Levite* also travelled the same Road, and looked upon the almost dying Man, but moved not a Finger to help him. At last, a *Samaritan*, who had some Humanity and a Sense of Compassion in Him, came by that Way, and He assisted the poor helpless Man, and took all due Care of Him. Now, the Question arising from the Case was, Whether the *Priest*, or the *Levite* (Both of them *Jews*) or the good *Samaritan*, most truly acted the Part of a *Neighbour* towards the distressed Man: And the *Lawyer* immediately gave Verdict in Favour of the kind *Samaritan*. By this means our Lord extorted a frank Confession even from a *Jew*, that the *Samaritans*, though of a *different Country*, and *Religion*, and though *hated* for the most part by the *Jews*, were nevertheless to be looked upon as *Neighbours*, whenever there should be Occasion, or Room for any *good Offices* between Them. For, if the *Samaritans* were to be esteemed as *Neighbours* to the *Jews*, it would follow of Course that the *Jews* should be considered as *Neighbours* to the *Samaritans*: And so from the Whole We are to learn, that no Difference of *Nation*, or *Religion*, no Distinction of *Party*, nor Division of *Interests*, or *Affections*, ever ought to restrain us from owning One our *Neighbour*, whom we are capable of *serving* in a neighbourly Way, by any kind *Offices* whatsoever.

From these Principles it follows, that *All Mankind* are in some Sense, or to some Degree, our *Neighbours*; because our *Prayers* at least, if nothing more, may extend to All: And That is a friendly Office, a neighbourly Kindness, which though the easiest, and the cheapest of any, is acceptable however to God, when it is all that we are capable of doing. There are several Texts of the New Testament which interpret the Love of our Neighbour to mean *universal Benevolence*, or Friendliness towards the whole Kind, as Opportunities may offer. *As we have Opportunity*, (saith St. PAUL) *let us do good unto All Men.*† And again: *Ever follow that which is good, both among your Selves, and to All Men.*‡ Follow

C 3

Peace

† Gal. vi. 10.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 15.

Peace with all Men. § Be patient towards All Mankind. And gentle unto all Men. ¶ Shewing all Meekness unto All Men. ||

From all which it is plain, that in Construction of Gospel Law, *Every Man* whom we can any Way *See*, is our Neighbour. Be He far off or near; Be He Friend or Adversary; Be He Christian or Alien; Be He Dissenter or Churchman; Be He Papist or Protestant; Be He Jew, Turk, or Infidel; He is a Neighbour in some Sense, and in some Degree, being allied to us, as One of the same Species, and of the same Flesh and Blood, of the same Human Race, a Descendant of Adam the common Father of All below, a Creature of God the common Father of All above. And as God is a Lover of Mankind at large, so ought every good Man to consider Himself as a Citizen of the World, and a Friend to the whole Race; in *real Effect* to Many, but in *good Inclination* and *Disposition*, and in kind Wishes and Prayers, to *All*. So much for the Extent of the Name, or Notion of Neighbour.

II.

Next, I am to explain, what it is to love our Neighbour, or All Men, as we love our *Own Selves*. This is not to be understood of the *Degree*, or *Measure* of our Love: For, if we were bound to love All Men *equally* with Ourselves, there would be but one Measure for All, and there would be no Room left for loving One Person *more* than Another, or for *preferring* our *Own Safety* (under difficult Circumstances) before that of *Another Man*. Such an *equal Degree* of Love is neither *practicable*, nor *reasonable*. It is not *possible* to love Friends and Enemies, Allies and Aliens, Worthy and Unworthy, All in the *same Degree*: Or if it were possible, yet both *Scripture* and *Reason* direct us to love with *Distinction*, and to give the Preference where it is found due. *Do good unto All Men*, says the Apostle: But then He immediately adds, *especially unto Them who are of the Household of Faith*. St. PAUL had his particular and most intimate Friends, such as LUKE, TIMOTHY, and TITUS, whom He loved *above Others*; And even our Lord Himself (an unexceptionable Example) had his prime Favourites, namely his *Apostles*; and amongst *Them*, He had One whom He loved above the rest, who was therefore eminently called, *The Disciple whom Jesus loved* †. From all which it is manifest, that the Precept of the Text does not mean that we should love our Neighbours, that is,

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§ Heb. xii. 14. † 1 Thess. v. 14. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 14. || Tit. iii. 2,

§ Gal. vi. 10, †† John xiii. 23. xix. 26. xx. 2. xxi. 7, 20,

All Men, as *highly*, or in an *equal Degree* with our Selves; but as *truly* and as *sincerely*, and in a Degree proper to their *several Circumstances, Merits, or Capacities*, and the Relation they bear to us, nearer or more remote. Love a *Jew*, a *Turk*, or an *Infidel*, considered as a *Man*, allied to us in the same common Nature: But love a *Christian*, and particularly a *good Christian*, as allied to us not only by the same common Nature, but also by the same common *Faith* and *Hope*, and by a Conformity of *Manners*, suitable to the Gospel of Christ. Deny not the common Offices of *Humanity*, Prayers, good Wishes, common Justice, Compassion, Mercy even to *Strangers* and *Aliens*, to the bitterest *Enemies*, or to the most enraged *Persecutors*: But reserve your *Intimacies*, your Endearments, your Largesses, your double or your treble Portions, for your more particular *Friends*, Kindred, and Allies; and among Them also preferring the Kindest and the *Best-deserving*.

But Some perhaps might here say; If such be really the Case, that We are to love our Neighbours with *Distinction*, and in Proportion only to their *Worth in general*, or their *Nearness to Us in particular*, of what Use or Significancy was it for our Lord to enforce the Rule by the Words *as thy self*? How does That additional Clause help us to understand the *Nature*, or *Extent* of the *Love* there prescribed?

To This I answer; that such additional Clause is of great Use in this Matter. For, whenever Men are wanting in any Part or Branch of their Duty towards their *Neighbour*, be He Friend or Foe, Countryman or Alien, there is always Something of *Selfishness* at the Bottom of it. It is either to save Trouble, or to save Money, or to gratify some weak Passion of Envy, Malice, Revenge, or the like. In short, some Kind of *Self-love*, ill directed, is what always stands in the Way, whenever We deny a *neighbourly Kindness* where due, in whatever Proportion it is due. Now, our Lord, by saying Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as *thy self*, strikes at the very *Root* of all Unfriendliness; and pierces every hard unrelenting *Self-lover* to the Heart. Put the Case, that an *Enemy* is brought to some Extremity of Distress, so as to want sudden Relief to save Him from perishing: Let not *Selfishness* interpose in this Case to intercept or obstruct your kind Offices. For, consider that You Yourself may sometime or other be brought into the like Distress, and may stand in need of the like friendly Offices; and how hard-hearted would You judge even the bitterest *Enemy* to be, if He should refuse You some cheap Assistance, in such Circumstances; where He might do a generous Act to another Person, with no great Danger or Trouble to Himself. Now what a Man would

judge so reasonable in his *Own* Case, He ought to judge as reasonable in the Case of *Another* Person. Such is the Use of considering one's *Self*, in all Cases of That Nature. Let a Man's own *Self-love* give Him a feeling Sense of what passes in the Breasts of Others, upon such Occasions; and according as He might reasonably hope or wish to be done to, so let Him do. It is on all Hands allowed, and universally expected, that every One should love *Himself* in the *first* Place, and in the *next* Place his *particular Friends, Relations, and Allies*: But yet Those *primary Obligations*, or Services, ought to be so conducted as to *leave Room* for kind Offices of a *secondary Nature*, and ought never to interfere with the sacred Rules of common Humanity, Justice, or Equity towards *All Mankind*. Serve Your Self in the *first* Place, and your Friends in the *second* Place; for That is right: But do it not at the Expence of Another Man's *just Claims*, nor do a *real Injury* to Any Man whatever, out of Favour or Affection to Your *Self*, or to Your *Friend*. If You do, You act against the Gospel-Rule of dealing with Others as You expect to be dealt with, and are convicted by Scripture and plain Reason, as guilty in That Article, not loving your *Neighbour* as You love Your *Self*. Every Man feels, in his *own* Case, without a Monitor, when He is injured, or hardly treated; and He is apt to be very impatient and clamorous upon it, if it be safe to complain. He ought to have as quick a Sense of Feeling, in his *Neighbour's* Case, as He has in his *Own*; and then He will not be inclined to take more Liberties than He is willing to give, or to trespass upon Others beyond what He would allow them to trespass upon Him. He thinks it hard, in his *own* Case, to be suspected of ill Designs without any just Colour for it, to be evil spoken of without a Cause, or to have his Life, Liberty, or Property invaded by Those who have no Authority or Right so to do. For the same Reason, He ought to be as tender of suspecting or aspersing his *Neighbours*: And whenever He is tempted to invade any of Their just Rights, let Him only ask Himself this Home-Question, Whether He should wish to be so used? Proper Exercise and Practice this Way, till it comes to be *habitual*, would soon teach a Man how to behave towards his Fellow-Christians or Fellow-Men: And his own Heart would be more to Him, than many Lectures of Christian Morality.

There is the more Need of frequent Exercise this Way, because indeed *Selfishness* is originally sown in our very Nature, and may perhaps be justly called our *Original Depravity*. It shews itself in the first dawn of our Reason, and is never well

well cured, but by a deep Sense of Religion, or much Self-Reflection. Every one feels his own Cravings and Appetites, and is naturally tempted and prompted to take the shortest Way of satisfying them, though it be at the Expence of Other Persons, and much to Their Prejudice; not considering that *Others* have Cravings as well as *They*, and have *Rights* to Themselves, which ought never to be *invaded*, but inviolably preserved. It is a long Time, commonly, before Men come to have a right clear Sense, and Feeling of Law and Justice, and of the Rules of Society: And when They have learned them, yet so long as a Principle of *Selfishness* is urging and prompting Them every Hour to transgress those good Rules, there is Nothing which can effectually restrain Men, but an awful Fear of the Divine Majesty, and Faith in a World to come. Neither will These be sufficient to give a Man due Feeling of his *Neighbour's* Case, and to prevent Acts of Hostility, till He has been inured to the constant Practice of making his *Neighbour's* Case his *Own*, and thereby learned from his own Self-Reflections, to deal equally and impartially by his Neighbours. *Selfishness* will bribe his Judgment, and blind the Eyes of his Mind, so as to make Him imagine that He is only asserting his own Rights, while every indifferent By-Stander will see that He is manifestly unequal, and injurious to Other Men. But let Him once turn the Tables, throwing *Self* out of the Question, or transferring it to his *Neighbours*, making their Case his *Own*, then the Mists of Self-Delusion will soon go off, and the Man will see clearly how He ought to behave towards Another Person, when considered as *Another Self*, or Another Same.

From hence may appear our Lord's profound Wisdom and deep Penetration into the darkest Recesses of Man's Heart; while to the Precept of *loving one's Neighbour*, He superadds This Home-Consideration, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as Thy Self*. Not *so highly*, or *so dearly*, as You love *Your Self*, (for That is not expected) but *as highly*, and *truly* as You could reasonably desire of *Him*, if his Case and Circumstances were *Yours*, and *Yours* were *His*. Judge from Your Self, and your own just Expectations from Others, how You ought to behave towards Them, in like Cases and Circumstances. There are many Persons in the World, Who make a Practice of affronting or defaming, of insulting or ridiculing, of defrauding or over-reaching, of molesting, oppressing, persecuting, without Shame or Remorse, and even without so much as any Sense or Feeling of what Others endure: But if

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Any One should but attempt in like Manner to affront, or defame, or molest, or any Way injure *Them*, They have then Their Sense of Feeling to an exquisite Degree, and are impatient to fill the Ears of as Many as They can apply to, with loud Clamours and Complaints. Such is the Manner of *Self-lovers*; and if Any Thing can ever cure Them of that sad Disease, it must be *Self-Reflection*, accompanied with *Divine Grace*; that, by considering their *own* Pains and Uneasinesses, as often as They are *Themselves injured*, They may learn to be *compassionate* and tender-hearted in their *Dealings with Others*, so as never to do Them an Injury of any Kind, either as to their Persons, or Property, Estate or Good Name. If They can once learn to be as tender and as sensible in their *Neighbour's* Case, as They are in their *Own*; and if they can be content to take no greater Liberties with Others, than They are willing that Others, in like Circumstances, should take with Them; then may They be truly said, and not till then, to *love their Neighbours as Them Selves*, according to our Lord's Commandment.

III.

Having thus competently explained the Precept of the Text, It remains now only, that in the Third and Last Place, I lay down some Considerations proper to enforce it.

1. *First*, Let it be considered, that This *Second* Commandment, relating to the *Love of our Neighbour*, is so like the *First*, relating to the *Love of God*, and so near akin to it, and so wrapp'd up in it, that They are Both, in a Manner, but *One Commandment*. He that truly, sincerely, consistently *loves God*, must of Course, *love his Neighbour* also: Or if He does not really love his *Neighbour*, He cannot, with any Consistency or Truth, be said to *love God*. For, if We truly *love God*, We must of Consequence be supposed to love what *God loves*: And since God is a *Lover of Mankind*, *The Love of God*, rightly understood, must inevitably include and imply *the Love of Man*. It is very natural, for Persons of corrupt Minds, to form to Themselves some imaginary Notion of a *Love of God*, *separate* from a *Love of Man*. They are tempted to it by their Passions, by their Humours and by their Interests; being very desirous of God's Favour at a cheap and easy Rate, and willing to express their Love of Him by Caresses, Compliments, and Endearments to Him, rather than by real and painful *Services* done to *Mankind* for his Sake. They will be *religious* and devout; will offer up their Prayers, Praises,

Praises, and Thanksgivings; will be Hearers of his Word, but not Doers of it; will wait upon Him at his Altar, perhaps with a warm Devotion, and yet not remember or not consider, that They are all the while greatly defective in Point of Love and Charity towards their Brethren. But, after all, Religion without Righteousness, or Devotion and Godliness without Brotherly Kindness, is an inconsistent, romantic Notion, a Contradiction in Terms. For, as St. JAMES says, *If any Man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue—This Man's Religion is vain* :† So it may be justly, and by Parity of Reason still in general, that if Any Man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his Resentments, his Malice, his Rancour, his Ambition, his Pride, and in short his Selfishness, That Man's Religion is vain. St. JOHN is very express to this Purpose, where He teaches thus : *If Any Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, He is a Liar : For, He that loveth not his Brother whom He hath seen, How can He love God whom He hath not seen* ¶ As much as to say, If Men do not their kind Offices to God's appointed Receivers, Who are visibly present with Them; How can They be presumed to have any true Love or Good-will towards God, Who is absent and invisible, and can receive no Kindness from Us but in and by his Receivers so present with us? So our Blessed Lord, elsewhere, interprets this Matter, shewing by what Marks and Tokens, chiefly, He judges of our Love towards Him. *In as much as Ye have done a kind Office unto One of the least of These my Brethren, Ye have done it unto Me* : And again; *In as much as Ye did it not to One of the least of These, Ye did it not to Me* *. So then, for the inforcing the Love of our Neighbours, Let it be duly considered, that it is the Proof, and the Perfection of our Love to God. He that really has the First, has the Second also : And He that has not the Second, has Neither. His Disaffection towards his Neighbour shews, that he has no true Affection towards God : For, *This Commandment have We from Him, that He who loveth God, love his Brother also* .† What God hath so joined and made inseparable, let not Man put asunder.

2. It may further be considered (which indeed is but the Consequence of the Former) that by This very Rule will the righteous Judge of All Men proceed at the last Day; as our Lord Himself has sufficiently intimated in the xxvth of St. MATTHEW. It will be in vain to plead at That Day, how holy, how religious, how devout We have been; How frequent or constant

† James i. 26. ¶ 1 John iv. 20. * Matt. xxv. 40, 45. † 1 John iv. 21.

constant in our Attendance upon God in his House; or in our Closets; How zealous for the Honour of his Name, or how unwearied in contending for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints: All these Things are good and commendable, if accompanied with true *Brotherly Love* and *Christian Charity*: But without it, They are *Nothing* in God's Sight, not so much as deserving the Names of Devotion, or Piety, or godly Zeal; because *Godliness* without *Charity* is not really *Godliness*, but a *Semblance* only, or a *Shadow* of it. The Duties of the *First Table* must take in with them the Duties of the *Second* also: Otherwise, They will be construed, by an All-seeing God, as *Compliments* only, or *empty Ceremonies*, rather than as *Acts of Love* towards Him. Therefore, if ever We hope to steer our Christian Course aright here, and to be accepted at the Mercy-Seat hereafter, Let Us give all *Diligence*, to add to our *Faith*, *Virtue*; and to *Virtue*, *Knowledge*; and to *Knowledge*, *Temperance*; and to *Temperance*, *Patience*; and to *Patience*, *Godliness*; and to *Godliness*, *Brotherly Kindness*; and to *Brotherly Kindness*, *Charity*.§.

§ Pet. i. 5, 6, 7.





S E R M O N III.

The Nature and Kinds of *Self-Love* explained and distinguished; and the *Boundaries* of an *innocent* and *culpable Self-Love*, limited and ascertained.

2 TIM. III. 1, 2.

*This know also, that in the last Days perilous Times shall come :
For Men shall be Lovers of their Own Selves.*

THE great Apostle, in these Words, reminds his Disciple TIMOTHY of the Danger and Difficulty of the Times into which He was fallen. *In the last Days*, saith He, that is, at the Conclusion of the *Jewish* State, and upon the Commencing of the last and best Dispensation, the Age of the MESSIAS, *perilous Times shall Come*, perilous especially to Good Men; *for Men shall be Lovers of their own Selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers, &c.* From such, He advises TIMOTHY to turn away; which makes it evident that the Persons, there characterized by St. PAUL, were the Men of the then present Age.

It is observable that the Phrase of *Lovers of their Own Selves*, which may sometimes bear a good Sense, is here plainly intended in a *bad* one. It stands First among the many black Characters recited by the Apostle: Probably because it is the Root and Principle of *other Vices*, the Source and Fountain of all the Evils and Disorders of the Moral World.

It is not every Self-love, but Self-love *ill-conducted*, and *misapplied*, Self-love emphatically so called, centring in *Self* only, and standing in Opposition to the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*. There is a *just* and *rational* Self-love, which

|| 2 Tim. iii. 5.

which is found in the very *Wise and Best of Men*: There is also a *natural and necessary Self-love common both to Good and Bad*: and there is an *irregular, inordinate Self-love peculiar to wicked Men*, the same that is condemned in the Text. These *Three Kinds of Self-love* ought to be carefully distinguished from each other, for the Information of our Judgment, and Direction of our Practice. I know not any Subject that is of nearer Concern to Us, or that better deserves to be set in a True Light: None more apt to be confounded and misunderstood than This is: And no greater Mischiefs can there be than Those which commonly arise from any Mistakes or Confusion about it.

My Design then is to state and clear the Notion of *Self-love*, that We may perceive distinctly how far, and in what Instances it is *innocent, or commendable*, and likewise in what Cases and Instances, it becomes *culpable and vicious*, and how it does so. In the Prosecution of this Subject I shall chuse the Method following.

I. I shall consider what *Self-love* in the *general* is, the *Nature, Design, and Purport* of it; and how far We *innocently may, or reasonably ought* to pursue the Dictates of it.

II. I shall proceed, *Secondly*, to consider the *Nature, and Tendency* of a *vicious Self-love*, and illustrate it by proper Instances.

III. I shall offer a few brief Considerations, proper to *prevent or cure* it.

I.

I shall consider what *Self-love*, in the *general*, is, the *Nature, Design, and Purport* of it; and how far We may *innocently pursue* the Dictates of it.

Self-love, considered in the *general*, abstracting from *particular Circumstances*, is neither a *Vice* nor a *Virtue*. It is Nothing but the Inclination, or *Propension* of every Man to his *Own Happiness*. A passionate Desire to be always pleased and well-satisfied; neither to feel nor fear any Pain or Trouble, either of Body or Mind. It is an *Instinct of Nature* common to All Men, and not admitting of any *Excess* or *Abatement*. Every Man loves Himself *infinitely*, or in the *highest Degree* possible. There is no Difference, in this Respect, between the Rich and the Poor, the Wise and the Unwise, or the Saint and the Sinner. The same Principle glows incessantly in every Breast, and with equal Fervency and Intensity.

tenseness. All our Pursuits, Practices, and Endeavours flow from this Fountain. It is This which actuates all our Powers and Faculties, keeps the World awake, and prevents a general Lifelessness and Inactivity.

As God has implanted in Us this Principle of Self-love, the *Spring* of all our Movements, so has He also endowed Us with *Reason* and *Thought* for the *Direction* of it. Reason and Thought hold out the Light, and shew us the Way to Happiness, while the Instinct of Self-love drives Us on in the Pursuit of it. The Latter without the Former would be no better than blind Instinct: And the Former without the Latter would be but useless Speculation, and dull lifeless Theory.

Now, Self-love, while it is under the Guidance of Reason directing it to true and solid Happiness, is rightly employed, and may be called a *rational*, and *commendable* Self-love. One general Rule may serve to distinguish the true and *rational Self-love*, from that which is *culpable* and *vicious*. Self-love directed to, and pursuing, what is, *upon the Whole, and in the last Result of Things, absolutely best for Us*, is *innocent* and *good*: And every *Deviation* from This is *culpable* and *vicious*; more or less so, according to the *Degree* and the *Circumstances* of it. I chuse thus to state the Matter with Reference to Our Selves and our own good, because This Rule is the clearest from all Ambiguity, as well as most certain in itself: Besides that it is best adapted to the Principles of Those whom I am now concerned with; and is indeed such a Rule as all other Rules and Measures must at length resolve into. If Any Man should rather state the Rule this other Way, or to this Effect, *Self-love pursuing the Dictates of Religion and Virtue, &c.* It would at length amount to the same Thing, and in the mean while, would be more ambiguous. For, if it be asked whether a Man should adhere to Religion and Virtue, on Supposition that *upon the Whole, and in the last Result*, He should become the *more miserable* for doing it; it must be answered that it is neither *reasonable*, nor *possible*, for a Man, with his Wits about Him, to do it: Which comes to the same as to say that there could be *no Virtue or Religion* in so doing. Be a Thing ever so good otherwise, yet if it be not so likewise with Respect to *Our Selves*, first or last, it loses all its Influence upon Us; and cannot be the Object of a *rational* and *deliberate Choice*. It might seem perhaps reasonable, in the Nature of the Thing (if We may be allowed to put an impossible Case) for a Man to submit to die and to be eternally extinct or miserable, for saving of many thousand Souls; because This is preferring a *public* to a *private* Interest,

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The *whole* to a *Part*. And yet This is what No One could *deliberately chuse*, while He has a Principle of *Self-love* remaining, neither could it be *reasonably* expected of Him. We can never be obliged to *chuse* any Thing which *upon the Whole*, and in the *last Result*, tends to *our Destruction*: Or to *refuse* any Thing which *upon the Whole*, and finally, tends to *our Happiness*. For This would be obliging us to *hate* Our Selves, which is impossible: It would be obliging Us to Something under *Pain* of being *happy* upon *Refusal*, and in *Hopes* of being *Rewarded* with *Misery*, which is all over contradictory and absurd; and therefore no *Obligation*. But the *Wisdom* and Goodness of Almighty God is highly conspicuous in this Affair; that whereas the *general Happiness* of the whole rational or intellectual System is what Himself proposes as the noblest End, and holds forth to All his Creatures; yet since No One can pursue Any Good but with Reference to *Himself*, and as his own particular Good, God has been pleased so to *connect* and interweave Those two, One with the Other, that a Man cannot really pursue his *own particular Welfare*, without consulting the Welfare of the *Whole*. His own *Private Happiness* is included in That of the *Public*: And there is, in Reality, no such Thing as any *separate Advantage*, or Felicity, opposite to the Felicity of the *Whole*, or independent of it.

Now, to resume our Thread of Discourse. We may depend upon it as a safe and certain Rule, that "Self-love, pursuing what is upon the Whole, and in the last Result of Things, absolutely best for us, is innocent and good." This will take in all Manner of Virtues, and all Degrees of them; and withal carries a sufficient *Motive* along with it; namely, That into which the Force of every *Obligation* is finally resolved. From this *general Principle*, thus asserted and vindicated, I may now proceed to *particular Acts* and Instances of an *innocent and commendable Self-love*, for the clearer Illustration of it.

It is evident to every considering Man, that we are not born for an Hour, or for a Day, or for this Life only, but for endless Ages. And therefore the wisest Course for any Man to take, is to secure an Interest in the Life to come. This is certainly, *upon the Whole*, and in the *last Result*, absolutely best for Him. He may love *Himself*, in this Instance, as highly, and as tenderly as He pleases. There can be no Excess of Fondness. or Self-Indulgence, in Respect of eternal Happiness. This is loving Himself in the best Manner, and to the best Purposes. All *Virtue* and *Piety* are thus resolvable into

into a Principle of *Self-love*. It is what Scripture itself, in other Words, resolves them into, by founding them upon *Faith* in God's Promises, and *Hope* of Things unseen.

In this Way, it may be rightly said, that there is no such Thing as *disinterested Virtue*. It is with Reference to Our Selves, and for our Own Sakes, that We love even God Himself. *We love Him, because He first loved us*†. That is, because We love Our Selves. He is our Sovereign Good, our prime Felicity; and We most truly love Our Selves in loving Him.

Some Divines of the *Mystic Way*, not distinguishing carefully between *Esteem* and *Love*, pretend that God is to be loved for his *own Sake only*, for his own intrinsic Excellency and Perfections. But This is a Difference rather in Words than in Things. We do love God for his *own Sake*, when We love Him not for any *low Regards*, or little sinister Ends; when We love Him as being infinitely more lovely, that is, infinitely more able to make Us happy, than all Things else besides. And yet This is loving him for our *Own Sakes*, and with *Regard* to Our Selves, who have our Happiness in Him, so amiable, and so kind a Being. In a Word, To love God, is in Effect the same Thing as to love Happiness, eternal Happiness; and the *Love of Happiness* is still the *Love of Our Selves*.

But will it not (may Some ask) be giving the Preference to *Our Selves*, if We love God only for our *Own Sakes*? I answer, No. If We were to make our Own Selves the *Object* of our Happiness, pretending to be happy from *Our Selves alone*, then indeed We might be thought to give the Preference to *Our Selves*: But while We acknowledge our own *Nothingness*, and our entire *Dependance* upon God for our Felicity, We give *Him* the Preference in our Love, as desiring Him above all Things. This Matter may be made Something clearer by distinguishing the double Senses of the Word *Love*, which Sometimes stands for *Love of Desire*, and Sometimes for *Love of Good-Will*. For Instance, when ISAAC is said to have loved *Savoury Meats*, or the PSALMIST is said to have loved *God's Law, Precepts, Testimonies, &c.* the Meaning is, that They *desired* those Things, found Delight, Pleasure, or Complacency in them. This is *Love of Desire*. But when We are commanded to *love our Neighbours*, or to love One Another, the Meaning is, that We *wish well* to Each Other, and be ready to do any Kindnesses We can. This is *Love of Good-Will*. To apply This Distinction to our present Purpose; our Love of God is most strictly and properly of

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the former Kind ; it is *Love of Desire*, rather than *Love of Good-Will* : For God is above our best Wishes ; and it is not easy to say what *Good-Will* towards a Being infinitely happy, and not capable of any Accession or Improvement to his Perfections, means. If then our Love of God be properly *Love of Desire*, it is plainly loving Him as being the *Object of our Desire*, and the *Source of our Happiness* ; and so it is loving Him for our *Own Sakes*. And there is no Room for the Question, *Whether We give Him the Preference to Our Selves in this Kind of Love* : For Preference must be supposed between *Object* and *Object*, not between the *Subject* of such Happiness, that is, *Our Selves*, and God the *Object* of it. And when We are said to love God *above all Things*, the Meaning strictly is, that We prefer Him, not before *Our Selves* (Who pretend not to be the *Objects* of our own Happiness) but before all other *Objects*, before all other Things which might be supposed to contribute any Thing to our Happiness.

It may be said perhaps, that there is a certain Sense wherein We may be conceived to love God with a *Love of Good-Will* : that We may bear a kind of Good-Will towards Him, when we wish that his Name may be exalted, his Laws observed, and his Glory promoted ; and that We ought to wish for This in the first Place, even before our own Happiness, and without any Regard to it. But these fine-spun Notions, however they may appear in Theory, and carry a Resemblance of the most resigned Devotion, and most exalted Piety, yet are, I am afraid, much too high for Practice, and perhaps hardly reconcilable with the Reason and Nature of Things. For, not to mention that all *Good-Will* towards God and his Glory, is really, *in the Result*, nothing else but *Good-will* towards the *Creature*, which is alone capable of receiving any Advantage, or Benefit, from a Display of God's Glory ; I say, not to mention This, We may venture to assert farther, that it is utterly impracticable for any reasonable Creature, having a Principle of *Self-Love*, to act at all without some *Motive*, that is, without a View to his *own Good*, present or future. And however Any Man may pretend to abstract from all *Self-Regards*, and to fix his Aims, Wishes, and Desires upon *God's Glory*, and That only ; yet amidst all that seeming Disregard to his own Welfare, this Thought will perpetually steal in, that the farther He runs off from *Self*, the more impossible will it be for Him to fail of being *Happy* ; the more He shuns it, the surer He must be of it : So that, at length, This seems to be only going a little more round about, to bring Him back again to the same Point :
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So necessary is it to regard *Our Selves* in every Thing: Which is so true, that if Any Person should conceive that He had no *Interest* at all to Serve, here or hereafter, in the Belief of a God, but that He must be for ever *miserable* on the Supposition that there is One; His first and most natural Wish would be that there were None. And it is upon This only Principle that any thinking Man can be an *Atheist*.

In Opposition to the Doctrine here laid down, Some fanciful Men have pretended that Any View to our *own Interest* and Happiness, is *mercenary*, and takes off from the Merit of Piety and Virtue; leaving it less worthy of Esteem: As if it were not sufficient for *perfect Love* to cast off *Fear*, but it must cast out *Hope* too. Virtue, They say, must be *entirely disinterested*, separate not only from all low and *sordid Views* of temporal Things, but from *all Views* whatever, all Prospect of Advantage, and chosen for its *own Sake only*. But these Gentlemen mistake the Maxim of the Old Philosophers, from Whom They seem to have borrowed their Notion, attending more to the Sound of Words, than to the Truth of Things. The Meaning is no more than This, that true Virtue is not, cannot be *founded* on any *low temporal Regards*; neither ought it to be *forsoaken*, however *unserviceable* it may sometimes prove to our *worldly Interests* or Pleasures. True and solid Virtue is indeed *disinterested*, in Respect of any *mean* and *sinister Views*, but not *entirely* and *absolutely* so. Those Who pretend to follow Virtue for Virtue's Sake, yet are used to heighten and magnify the *Delight* and *Pleasure* attending it. They plead that it is agreeable to Nature, as Food is to the Appetite; as Beauty, Order, and Symmetry to the Eye, or to the Mind. That is, it carries *temporal Pleasure* and Satisfaction along with it; and it is for the Sake of that Pleasure, They embrace and follow it. And what else is This, but chusing Virtue upon a Principle of *Self-love*, Self-love pursuing a *present* Satisfaction, and making *temporal Good* its End? The Difference then is only This; that They who practise Virtue without any Regard to a *Life to come*, do it upon an *inferior* Motive, of *meaner*, because *present*, Consideration: And there will be so much the less of *Virtue* in it as it comes short of that noble and generous Principle of *Faith*, by which a Man can be content to wave all Thought of *present Pleasure* and Advantage, and to wait for a Reward hereafter. In a Word then, There is no higher or nobler Motive to proceed upon (and *some* Motive we must have) than a Principle of *Faith* and *Hope*, a Prospect of eternal Happiness. This is so far from rendring our Piety, or Virtue, less

worthy of Esteem, that it most of all ennobles, and enriches it; and is indeed the very Flower and Perfection of it.

What I have here said, is illustriously confirmed by Holy Scripture, in many Places; and particularly in the eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, which is entirely spent in magnifying the Virtue of *Faith*. The Sublimest Virtues for which MOSES is there justly celebrated, are resolved into This; that *He had Respect unto the Recompence of Rewards*. The same Thing is plainly enough intimated of ABEL, NOAH, ABRAHAM, and Other Ancient Worthies there recited.

From hence then it appears sufficiently, that it is no *Disparagement* to Virtue or Piety, to Suppose it founded in *Self-love* rightly understood, but that the very Best of Men are, in a good Sense, *Lovers of their Own Selves*, in as high a Degree as Any Others are, or can be.

I may add, that They do not only love Themselves *absolutely*, but *comparatively* also; or with a Love of *Preference* to Other Persons. For since They love Others for their *own* Sakes, it is very manifest that They do, and must wish well to Themselves in the *first Place*, and to Others in the *second Place* only; in *Subordination* to, or so far as is consistent with the *superior* and prevailing *Affection* of *Self-love*. In Matters of slight Moment (such as all *temporal* Things are in Comparison) a Good Man may be content, however tenderly He loves *Himself*, to give the Preference to *Others*. He may readily resign up his Possessions, his Peace, his Liberty, or Life, for the Sake of his Country, or Brethren. This may be doing the wisest and best Thing He can do for *Himself*; being only exchanging a few fading and transitory Enjoyments, for a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. But as to any Thing farther, above and beyond This; as to giving up deliberately any certain Interest in a *Life to come*, though it were to save a whole World; This it is not in his Nature to do, if Almighty God could be supposed to admit of it. *Self* would prevail, and, in this Case, ought to prevail: And here there would be Nothing unreasonable or unjustifiable, Nothing but what is just and necessary, in a Man's loving Himself better than either Friends or Brethren, or than All the World besides. The Precept about *loving our Neighbours as Our Selves*, has no Place here; nor was it ever intended to reach this Case.

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To what has been said may be objected the Example of St. PAUL, in wishing Himself *accursed from Christ* for the Salvation of his Brethren†. To which Objection many Answers have been given, though perhaps not altogether satisfactory. I shall offer what I think both the shortest and the plainest Solution of the whole Difficulty. The Strength of the Objection seems to rest only upon the common Translations: For the Words of the Original will very well bear another Rendring. I would translate thus: *I could wish* (or I could be content) *to be devoted to Death, after Christ* (that is, as Christ was before me) *for my Brethren, &c.* The Words ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, I render, *after Christ*, *after his Example*, or as He was before me. There is the like Phrase made use of by the same Apostle in his Second Epistle to TIMOTHY: *I thank God, whom I serve ἀπὸ πατέρων, after my Forefathers*, or, *as my Forefathers have done before me.*‡ The Phrases here and there are exactly parallel, and the Construction alike in Both. Now admitting such a Translation of Rom. ix. 3. as I have mentioned, the Objection is removed at once. For all that St. PAUL declares is, that He should be content, willing, or even glad to die for the Sake of his Brethren and Countrymen, *following Christ therein*, Who had died for the same. There is the like Thought in the first Epistle of St. JOHN, *Hereby perceive we the Love of God* (that is, of Christ,) *because He laid down his Life for us: And we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*|| There is much such another Wish as St. PAUL's, recorded by CLEMENS of ALEXANDRIA, as made occasionally by the Evangelist St. JOHN. Speaking to a young Man whom He loved, He says: *I could willingly suffer Death for You, as the Lord died for Us. For Thee I could lay down my own Life.* The Thought is much the Same with That of Rom. ix. 3. and is a good Comment upon it.—But to return.

Having shewn that Self-love, while pursuing Eternal Happiness, is allowable and commendable, and not so much as capable of any *Excess* in Measure or Degree; We may from thence infer, that there can be no *culpable* Self-love but in Respect of *Temporal* Things. And yet, even in *this* Respect, there may be a Degree of Self-love, not only *innocent*, but *praise-worthy*. *Temporal* Felicity may undoubtedly demand a Share in our Affection and Concern. The first and most natural Dictate of *Self-love* is to endeavour to be always easy, and never to be afflicted with any Degree of Pain, Misery, or Trouble. *Present* Happiness is What we All perpetually

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† Rom. ix. 3.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 3.

|| 1 John iii. 16.

with for, if really good for Us; and It is What even the Wisest and Best of Men would not submit to part with, while They can have it, but for the Sake of Something better. To deny Our Selves Any Gratification, without an *Equivalent* either in Hand, or in Prospect, is *unnatural* and unreasonable. It is *refusing Happiness* formally considered *as such*; and is therefore neither a *rational*, nor indeed a *possible* Choice. For the like Reasons It is natural for Us to endeavour after a speedy Deliverance from any present Uneasiness, by all *proper* Methods: And All are *proper* which do not in their Consequences, Here or Hereafter, tend to involve Us in more or greater. No Man can be moved to Submit to any Thing painful, but in Order to avoid Something more painful: For That would be *chusing Misery as such*, and would be a Degree of *Self-Hatred*, of which our Nature is not capable. What Man, in his Senses, would chuse to be uneasy so much as for a Moment, without a valuable Consideration for it, or to prevent the Suffering of Something worse?

One would not indeed covet any Satisfaction in this Life, the Enjoyment whereof might deprive us of greater Good: Nor would a wise Man desire to be delivered from present Pains, by any such Methods as would draw after them a Train of greater Evils. That would be Folly and Madness; and therefore it is the Height of Imprudence to break in, at any Time, upon the Rules of Religion and Virtue, which are of *Eternal* Concernment, for the sake of any *temporal* Good; besides that the Practice of Virtue is so generally necessary to Happiness, even in a temporal Respect, that it can seldom be of any real and lasting Advantage, even in a worldly Account, to deviate from it. But within these Bounds, and with proper Cautions, Some Degree of our Love may be reasonably placed upon *temporal* Things. And indeed there is No Man so resigned, and dead to the World, as not to make it, in some Measure, the Object of his Affection and Care; looking upon the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life as the Blessings of Heaven, and as contributing to his Repose and Tranquillity. It is possible (though it be a Fault on the right Hand, and not very common) to love the World *too little*. Some have been so superstitious, as to think Religion almost inconsistent with any worldly Ease or Pleasure: And have run into an Extreme of *Self-denial*, *Mortification*, and *corporal Austerities*. But This is a Mistake. A chearful and moderate Enjoyment of the good Things of this Life, is well-pleasing to God, as well as suitable to the Nature of Man. To torment and afflict Our Selves needlessly, is not more un-

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natural in itself, than it is displeasing to God, who delights in the Happiness of his Creatures; and chuses rather an *easy* and *cheerful*, than an *austere* and *sower* Obedience. If therefore We so love present Happiness, in such only Proportion or Degree as may not interfere with a greater Happiness to come; if our Love of Riches, Honours, or Pleasures be wisely and justly regulated, and kept in due Subordination to those Things which are more Excellent, and of infinitely higher Concernment; there is then no Harm, but rather much Good in it; and such a *Self-love*, exerting itself in the Pursuit of temporal Things, may well become wise, great, and good Men. Having considered *what Sort of Self-love*, and in *what Degree*, is *innocent* or *commendable*, I proceed,

II.

To consider the Nature and Tendency of a *Vicious Self-love*, and to illustrate it by proper Instances. This may be dispatched in fewer Words, upon the Principles before laid down. From What hath been said, It may appear that there is no Danger, no Possibility of loving *Our Selves too well*: But We may happen to love *some Things too much*; and Those are *temporal* Things only. When we *blindly follow* the Instinct or Appetite of *Self-love*, coveting every Thing which looks fair and flattering, and running greedily upon it, *without weighing Circumstances*; or *considering Consequences*; or when, to get rid of any *present Pain* or Uneasiness, We take any Method which first offers, without reflecting how dearly We may pay for it *afterwards*; I say, when We do thus, then it is that our *Self-love* beguiles us, degenerates into a *vicious*, or at least, silly Appetite; and comes under the Name of an *overweening*, *excessive*, or *inordinate* *Self-love*: By which We do not mean that any Man *loves Himself*, or his own Happiness, *too highly* (for That is impossible) but that He suffers the natural Instinct of *Self-love* to carry Him *too far* after the *present* Satisfaction, farther than is consistent with his *more real* and durable Felicity. There may be a Fault in miscalculating even of *temporal* Things, compared One with Another: As if a Man, for Instance, should, for a small Advantage in Hand, give up the Reversion of a considerable Estate; or should value his Ease above his Health, or suffer a Gangreen to grow till it becomes incurable, rather than submit to the Pain of an Incision. These are all so many Instances of an *ill-conducted*, *overweening* *Self-love*;

the very *Effence* and Spirit whereof consists in a *blind Regard* to some *present Ease*, Convenience, or Satisfaction; without attending to What it may *afterwards* cost Us, or to the *final Result* of Things.

If the Love of any *present Pleasure*, Humour, or Interest, so entirely possess the Heart, as to drive out all due Regard to the *Honour of God*, and the *Good of Mankind*; then It is emphatically called *Self-love*, and more properly *Selfishness*: Not that such Persons love Themselves more truly, or more highly than Others do; but they so love Themselves, as to love None besides; They are Lovers of *Themselves only*. A good Man loves *Himself* as highly, and as tenderly as possible; but then He takes into his Scheme of Happiness the *Love of God and Men*, as essentially requisite thereto. The *Self-lover*, on the other Hand, affects a Kind of *separate, independent* Happiness, without a due Regard either to God or Man; vainly hoping to make Himself happy in Despite to Both. He is weak enough to expect Happiness from a few fading and transitory Enjoyments; in the mean while contemning, or at least neglecting, the two *essential Ingredients* of all true and solid Felicity. To understand the Nature of this Inchantment, and how it come to pass that Those who love Themselves so well, can thus consent to ruin and destroy Themselves, both Bodies and Souls, for ever; let us trace its Steps and Progress, in two or three the most remarkable Instances of it; as *Pride*, *Sensuality*, and *Avarice*; from whence We may form a Judgment of all the other Instances that come under it.

I. To begin with *Pride*. All the Happiness of Life is summed up in two Articles; *pleasing Thoughts*, and *pleasing Sensations*. Now, *Pride* is founded in *Self-flattery*; and *Self-flattery* is owing to an immoderate Desire of entertaining some kind of *pleasing Thoughts*. It is a pleasing Imagination for a Man to fancy himself possessed of uncommon Privileges or Endowments. The more He dwells upon the Thought, and the more He magnifies to Himself his real or imaginary Perfections, the higher his Satisfaction rises; and in a while it becomes painful and mortifying to Him to think otherwise. Thus far it is no more than *Self-flattery*, kept up purely by the inward *Pleasure* attending it, and the sensible *Pain* and *Uneasiness* of being checked or contradicted in it. The next Step is to set a high *Value* upon Himself, for What He conceives great or considerable belonging to Him; and He proceeds to demand Respect and Deference from Others, suitable to the Opinion and Esteem which He has of Himself. Thus commences

mences *Pride, Haughtiness, and Arrogance*. Within a while *Envy, Hatred, Animosity, and Revenge* ensue against All that stand in his Way. He must depress Others, in Order the more to aggrandize Himself; and must endeavour to obstruct his Neighbour's Happiness, lest it should prove in any Measure prejudicial to his Own. Thus the unhappy Man, for the Pleasure only of a fond Thought at first, runs Himself by Degrees into innumerable Irregularities, and withal Anxieties. He gives up the most divine and transporting Pleasure of this Life, and entirely forfeits all just Pretences to a Better. So blind is *Self-love*, in some Instances, so inconsiderate is *Selfishness*, that it most effectually baffles and defeats its own Designs.

2. Another Instance of *inordinate, ill-conducted Self-love* is, *Sensuality*. This belongs to the *Body* more than to the *Mind*; is of a gross Taste, and of the coarser Kind, aiming only at *pleasing Sensations*. It so far agrees with *Pride*, that it makes Men pursue the *present Gratification* at the Expence of the *public Peace*, and to their own *future Misery and Ruin*. The Happiness which it pretends to, is in itself mean and disparaging; and inevitably draws after it innumerable Mischiefs, either in this World, or the Other.

3. A third Instance, of blind and *inordinate Self-love* is, *Avarice, or Self-interestedness*. This is of larger and more diffusive Influence than Either of the Former. So great a Part of temporal Felicity is conceived to depend upon Riches, that the Men of this World lie under the strongest Temptations to this Vice of any. If the Case be such, that Treachery and Fraud, Guile and Hypocrisy, Rapine and Violence, may be serviceable to the End proposed; the blind Self-lover will charge through all, rather than be defeated of his covetous Designs, or bear the Uneasiness of a Disappointment. Thus He comes to prefer his own *private, present Interest*, before *Virtue, Honour, Conscience, or Humanity*.

With Respect to Himself and his own *real Happiness*, He runs into the same Fallacy and Misconduct which I before mentioned. He considers not What would be good for Him *upon the Whole*, and in the last Result; but lives *extempore*, contrives only for a few Days, or Years at most, looking no farther. The Height of his Ambition reaches not beyond *temporal Felicity*; and He miscalculates even in That. He divests Himself of all the soft and good-natured Passions of Humanity, Kindness, Pity, and Tenderness; in the Exercise whereof consists the most refined and delicate Pleasure of Life. He considers not that Generosity, Friendliness, Honesty, &c. are Qualities very agreeable to a rational Nature,
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and come recommended by their own Sweetness ; that They are apt to attract the Eyes and Hearts of Men, create Reverence and Esteem, and tend to render any Person, who is remarkable for them, the Delight and Darling of Mankind: Upon a just balancing the Account, the *Self-lover* will be found no Gainer, in Respect even of *worldly* Happiness ; and yet That is but a Trifle, and a Shadow, meer Emptiness and Vanity, in Comparison to Joys Eternal.

These Instances may be sufficient to shew both the *Nature* of *Self-love*, in the *bad Sense*, and the *Folly* of it. I have insisted more upon the Hurt which such *Self-lovers* do to *Themselves*, than upon the Mischief They bring to *Others*: Because the Former is indeed the most considerable ; and yet, being less open and visible, is the least taken Notice of. They are *Enemies* to *All Mankind*: But still They are the greatest *Enemies* to their *Own Selves*. They hinder and obstruct the Happiness of Many, for a Time ; but they entirely defeat and destroy their Own ; and that to all Eternity.

The Apostle has observed, and All Men know, that Times are *perilous*, where such Persons abound. For, what a World of Savages should We Soon find, if the narrow, *selfish* Principles prevailed ; if Beneficence, Love, and Kindness, which hold the World together, were to be banished from among Men ! The truly noble and generous Principle for which every Man is designed, and in which his own particular Happiness is contained, is That of an *universal Benevolence* and Good-Will towards All. And any Affections, or Inclinations, deviating from thence, or opposite thereto, are so many Degrees of *Selfishness*, or Approache towards it. From whence we may remark, that if Any be Lovers of their *own Country*, and *That only*, regardless of the Rules of Humanity, Justice, and Equity with *Other Nations*, They are so far *selfish*, and are, in a loose or large Sense, *Lovers of their Own Selves only*.

If Any, still more straightened in their Affections, instead of seeking the *common Good* of their Country, confine their good Wishes, Services, and Endeavours to their *own Tribe, Sect, or Party*, regardless of the common Rules of Equity, Justice, or Charity towards *Others* ; They are *Self-lovers* in a stricter Sense than the former ; and indeed in as strict a Sense as Men commonly can be. Even Thieves and Robbers, however narrow and *selfish* in their Principles and Practices, yet are usually true, just, and kind to their *Partners* and *Associates*. The very Persons whom the Apostle condemns as *Lovers of Themselves only*, extended their Affections and Services respectively, beyond their own proper Persons. They were
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linked together for mutual Defence; and while they were fierce, cruel, and implacable towards All besides, yet They respected, valued, and loved One Another.

Let Men be ever so *selfish*, They do not pretend to be entirely *independent*, as it were detached from their Kind. They can carry on but few Designs without Confederates and Assistants. But They are nevertheless *Self-lovers* for This, while They have not a true Principle of Benevolence, Love, and Goodness towards the Rest of Mankind. There is indeed a Semblance of Social Virtues, and of Christian Charity, kept up among the Members of the same Faction, or Party. They love One Another at first Sight; are kind, open, and affable: They see no Faults, or else kindly excuse them: They have a compassionate Tenderness for Each Other in Case of any Disaster; or, in Case of good Fortune They rejoice in common. All this is right; and It might pass for Christian Charity, did not their Partiality and Disaffection, their Hatred and Rancour against *Others*, betray the Leanness of a *Party-Principle*, instead of the large and generous Spirit of *true Christianity*.

But to return: Having hitherto traced the *Grounds* and *Causes of inordinate Self-love*, and pursued it through its most remarkable Acts and Instances wherein it usually discovers itself, It remains now only

III.

To offer a few brief Considerations, proper to prevent or cure it.

It is very evident, from What hath been observed above, that the *Self-lovers* are not greater Enemies to *Others* in *Intention*, Than they are in *Effect* to *Themselves*. Yet it is not less evident, that They love Themselves passionately all the Time; and whatever Hurt They do to their Own Selves, They certainly *mean* none. They run upon it as a Horse rushes into the Battle, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, and as a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and know not that it is for their Life. This is not owing to meer Stupidity, or to the Dulness of their intellectual Faculties. Men of Parts, Penetration, and Judgment, as to other Matters, often fall into it, while the plain, simple Man keeps to the right Way. It is not so much Want of Thought, as thinking in a *wrong Channel*, which first occasions it. A very little Compass of Thought will suffice to convince any Man of the Difference between *Time* and *Eternity*;

Eternity; nor can Any One so mistake in his Judgment, as to think that this poor Pittance of Happiness to be found here, can be any thing comparable to the Joys of Heaven and eternal Glories. The contrary is so plain, that even the dullest Man alive can easily apprehend it; and Many Who have no extraordinary Quickness, nor Reach above other Men, but are of much inferior Understanding and Abilities, readily receive it. Why is it then, that Men of Parts and Wit do not see what lies so open and visible to common Apprehensions? The Case is This: They are constantly taken up with other Things, and so never attend to it. Their Thoughts are employed another Way; the World has taken early Possession of Them, and has laid such a Train of Pursuits in their Way, that They are entangled with them ever after. This is really the Case of all Those who, mistaking the true Felicity of Man, pursue a Shadow and a Phantom to their own Destruction. It is for Want of thinking in a *right Way* that Men fall into this fatal Misconduct; and Nothing but serious and sober Thought can bring Them out of it. I shall just suggest two or three useful Considerations, and then conclude.

1. We should endeavour to fix in our Minds this great and plain Truth, that there can be no such Thing as *true Happiness*, separate from the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*. It is a firm unalterable Maxim, riveted in the very Frame and Constitution of Things. To seek for Happiness in any other Way, is as absurd as to expect *Grapes from Thorns*, or *Figs from Thistles*. What *Happiness* can Any thinking Man propose *separate from God*, the Center of all Happiness? And if *Man* be made a *sociable Creature*, it is as vain for him to propose any *separate independent Happiness* from the *Rest of the Kind*. Men are designed to live in Confort, and to be happy, if so at all, in the mutual Friendship and Enjoyment of Each Other. It is the Law of their Creation, the Condition of their Being: And therefore any pretended Happiness, *separate* from the *common Good* of Mankind, is a meer Dream and a Delusion, a Contradiction to the Reason and Nature of Things.

2. A *Second* Consideration, proper to be hinted, is, that Man is made for *Eternity*, and not for *This Life* only. No Happiness can be true and solid, which is not lasting and durable as Our Selves. And what if the *Self-lover* could secure the greatest worldly Felicity, still it is confined within the Circle of a few Years, may die before Him, and must however with Him, and leave Him empty and destitute to all
Eternity,

Eternity. Is This all that his extreme Love and Fondness for Himself amounts to? Is it not like feasting for a Day, to starve ever after; or rejoicing for an Hour, only to lament and mourn for endless Ages? Is This the Kindness They pretend to have for their Own Selves? The bitterest Enemies could not hurt Them worse, or be really more severe and cruel than They are to Themselves.

To conclude: The Way to arrive at *true Happiness*, is, to take into Consideration the *whole Extent and Compass of our Being*; to enlarge our Views beyond our *little Selves* to the *whole Creation* round us, whereof we are but a slender Part; and to extend our Prospect beyond *this Life* to remote and *distant Glories*. Make *Things future* appear as if they were *now present*, and *Things distant* as if they were *near and sensible*. This, with the Help of God's Grace, may cure us of our *narrow Thoughts*, and shew us the Necessity of enlarging our Hearts and Affections. As to *Self-lovers*, They are not advised to love Themselves at all *the less*, but only to love Themselves *more judiciously*, and to *better Purpose*; not to *lay aside their Concern for Happiness*, for that's impossible, but to mix Something more of *Discretion and Judgment* with it; that instead of pretending to be in any Degree *happy in Opposition* both to *God and Man* (a Thing utterly impossible) They may study and endeavour constantly to *love God*, and to *love their Neighbours*, that is, *All Mankind*; and then They will the *most wisely*, and the *most effectually*, *love their Own Selves*.





S E R M O N IV.

The Duty of *Keeping the Heart*; and the Importance of it illustrated, from the *Dependence* of our *Religious Conduct*, in Faith and Practice, on the *Inward Frame* and Disposition of the *Mind*.

PROV. IV. 23.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence: For out of it are the Issues of Life.

AMONG the many wise and admirable Precepts given us by King SOLOMON, there is None more worthy of our Observation than This which I have here recited. We are exhorted, in Holy Scripture, to *keep our Tongues* from Evil, and our Eyes from wandering after insnaring Objects; to *keep our Feet* from going astray, to take heed to our Ways, and to ponder our Paths: But the shortest and the surest Rule is, to *keep our Hearts*; to set a diligent Watch there, where all our Works and Ways begin, and from whence they all derive their moral Quality. *A Good Man out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth That which is good: And an Evil Man out of the evil Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth That which is evil†*: Which is the same in Effect with what is observed in the Text, that *out of the Heart are the Issues of Life*. From thence proceeds all that is blameable, or praise-worthy in Us: And according as We are more or less careful in keeping, or regulating the *Heart*, so will our Lives and Conversations be better, or worse.

By

† Luke vi. 45.

By the *Heart* We are to understand the *Frame, Disposition, and Temper of the Soul, or Mind*. As the *Head* is sometimes used to signify the Seat of *Reason* and *Thought*; so the *Heart* very oft denotes the Seat of the *Affections, Passions, and Desires*. The Philosophy of this Way of Speaking is what We need not concern Our Selves with. It is sufficient to observe, that This is frequently, or generally, the Scripture-Notion of the Word *Heart*. Instances are so many, and so easily occur, that it would be only mispending Time, and trespassing on the Audience, to produce Any. Not to trouble Our Selves therefore with the different Senses of Interpreters upon the Text, the most obvious and natural Meaning of it appears to be This; that We ought, with the utmost Care and Application, to attend to, and regulate the *inward Frame, Temper, and Disposition* of our Minds; for this very good Reason, because the whole Course and Tenor of our Lives and Conversations, and consequently our Happiness and Misery, depend upon it. *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence: For out of it are the Issues of Life.*

The Reason, or Foundation, of the Precept is put last in the Text: But, in treating of it, it will be convenient to invert the Order, and to consider it first. The Precept, being a practical Inference, may most naturally follow after, as the *Conclusion* follow the *Premises*: And We shall the more easily apprehend What is implied or contained in the *Precept*, after We have seen what *Foundation* it has in the Nature and Reason of Things. I shall therefore endeavour to shew,

- I. How the *Issues of Life*, in a Religious Respect, depend upon the *Heart*. And,
- II. What is implied or contained in the Precept of the Text: *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.*

I.

I shall endeavour to shew how the *Issues of Life*, in a Religious Respect, depend upon the *Heart*.

ALL Things relating to our Religious Conduct, are reducible either to some Matter of *Belief*, or *Practice*: Something to be *believed*, or *done*. We are therefore to consider how far either our *Belief* or *Practice* is subject to be influenced by the *Heart*; that is, by the *Affections* and *Inclinations*, the *Drift* and *Bent* of our Minds.

1. To

I. To begin with *Belief*. How much That depends upon the Temper and Disposition of the *Heart*, is very easily seen from Scripture, and History, and from daily Experience. Our Blessed Lord hath told Us, that *if Any Man will do his Will, He shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God*;† intimating, that the *Belief* of Gospel-Truths depends much on the *Disposition* which Men are in to receive them. If the *Heart* be *well-affected* towards them, they will find easy Admittance: But if the *Heart* be *disaffected*, or has entertained any Aversion to them; it will be the hardest Thing in the World to prevail for their Reception. It was with a View to This that our Blessed Saviour said in another Place, *Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, He shall not enter therein*;‡ insinuating, that *Simplicity of Mind and Heart*, free from *Prejudice* and *Prepossession*, is highly requisite for the *receiving of the Truth*. How readily did NATHANIEL believe in CHRIST! The Reason was, that He was a Man *without Guile*: He had an honest and *upright Heart*, no sinister or *secular Ends* to serve, no *evil Affections* to mislead Him; Therefore was He fully disposed both to believe and embrace the Gospel. But the *Scribes and Pharisees* were Men of *corrupt Hearts* and *secular Aims*; full of *Ambition*, *Avarice*, and *Pride*, and other *vile Affections*. This rendered Them utterly averse to the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST: And accordingly Miracle upon Miracle, and all the other Ways and Means which an All-wise God saw proper to make Use of for their Conviction, proved ineffectual. *They loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil*. The same, or the like Account, may be given of the *Gentiles*, Those that rejected the Offers of Life and Happiness by the Gospel. They wanted not *sufficient Means* of Conviction; but They would not believe What lay so cross to the *Inclinations* and *Passions* of their *corrupt Hearts*. The Case of Many who reject Christianity in general, or reformed Christianity in particular, is resolvable also into some *evil Affection* or *Inclination* of the *Heart*. Why do the *Jews*, *Pagans*, or *Mahometans* persist in their Errors, respectively, but because *Education*, *Authority*, *Prepossession* and *Prejudice* have inclined Them to think in such a Way; and *Inclination* has grown up into a standing and *unalterable Persuasion*? Why do the *Romanists* adhere to their erroneous Tenets, so contradictory, many of them, to Scripture, and Antiquity, and even to common Sense, but that their *Hearts* and *Affections* are tied and bowed down to them by the Weight of *Education*,
Custom,

† John vii. 17.

‡ Mark x. 15.

Custom, Reputation, Interest, or other the like Prejudices and secular Inducements? As to particular Men, It would be endless to observe how their *Affections and Passions* have often had the greatest Hand in their *Opinions*. Ambition and Vain-glory, Malice and Revenge, Lust and Avarice, have, in all Ages, produced pernicious and monstrous Tenets. There is hardly any Thing so absurd, but Some or Other may be brought to believe it, provided their *Affections and Passions* lean towards it, and become Parties in it. Were it not for This, our Understandings, weak as they are, would very seldom deceive us. *Ignorance* is not the principal Cause of Error, but a *Forwardness of judging* before We see Reason for it; which is chiefly owing to the *Corruption of the Heart*, intercepting the due Use and Exercise of our *rational Faculties*, and driving Us on into *precipitate Judgments*. But I proceed to consider, What I principally intended,

2. Our *Practice*: How That, as well as our *Belief*, is subject to be influenced by the *reigning Passion* or Inclination of the *Heart*. This may appear, in some Measure, from What hath been already observed. For if the *Belief*, or *Judgment*, often takes its Tincture from the *Heart*, This may happen in Points of *Morality*, as well as in any Other; and then there can be no Question, but the *Practice* will be suitable and conformable to the *Persuasion*. If *Inclination* and *Judgment*, *Heart* and *Head* both conspire; Nothing can be wanting to determine the Choice, and to influence the *outward Practice*.

But it remains to be considered, how far the *Practice* is apt to be governed by the *Inclination of the Heart*, without the *Concurrence of the Judgment*, or even in *Opposition* to it. I am not supposing either an impossible, or an uncommon Case. Experience, History, and Observation may too sadly convince us All, that it is neither. Men not only may be, but generally are, more swayed by their *Affections and Passions* than by their *Principles*: And *Principles* are of very little Force or *Efficacy*, except when They fall in with *Inclination*, or grow up into it. We may observe *Jews and Pagans, Mahometans and Christians, Papists and Protestants, Dissenters and Churchmen*; Men of different *Principles*; but the same *Inclinations, Affections, and Passions* prevail amongst All: And He that knows *Human Nature* well, may pass a truer Judgment of Any of Them, than One who considers barely their respective *Principles* or *Persuasions*. Were We to form a Judgment of *Christians* in particular, from the *Bible* only, rather than from the *Temper and Disposition of Mankind in*

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general,

general, We should be widely mistaken. There is the same Pride and Ambition, the same Treachery and Deceit, the same Luxury and Lewdness, the same Envy and Hatred, the same Rancour and Bitterness; in a Word, the same Follies and Vices reigning among *Christians*, as We shall meet with in Other Men. It is not their *Principles*, but the *Disposition* and *Temper*, common to Them and Others, which for the most Part actuate and govern Them. For can We think, that They do not *believe* the Religion They profess? Are They so many Hypocrites and Dissemblers, *pretended Christians*, but *real Deists*, *Pagans*, or *Atheists*? No certainly, but very far from it. They do *believe*, and That *sincerely* too, the Christian Religion: They have not any Doubt or Scruple of it: They abhor Those who have: They value and esteem it much: would, very probably, rather than renounce it utterly, even die for it: And They hope at length to be saved by it: And yet notwithstanding *live not up to it*. The Number of *Atheists* or *Deists*, in our own, or other Christian Countries, is certainly very small and inconsiderable. There are not so many *Infidels* as would be thought so, or perhaps *wish* to be such. *Inclination* and *impure Affection* will do much with Some Men: But yet They cannot always believe, or disbelieve just what They please. Besides, there is not Temptation enough to Infidelity, a very difficult Thing to attain to in any Christian Country. Men can *elude* their Principles with much more Ease than They can *renounce* them; and therefore need not take Sanctuary in *Atheism*, or *Infidelity*.

Shall We say then, that *Christians*, believing their Religion in the *Gross*, yet understand not its *particular Doctrines*? That They do not know, for Instance, that Pride or Luxury, Avarice or Intemperance, Treachery or Fraud, Malice or Revenge, is as opposite to their Religion, as Darkness is to Light? No. This cannot be pretended. They know These Things perfectly well: They condemn those Vices in Others, nay even in Themselves. Besides, it must be owned farther, that Many may have Learning and Abilities as great as any Casuist; may be particularly versed in Scripture and Morality; may make Religion, and even practical Religion, their familiar Study and Business; may be weekly, or daily, employed in instructing and reforming the World; and yet be ambitious and covetous, proud or luxurious, secular in their Views, and hypocritical in their Pretences. Knowledge is One Thing, and Grace another: *Orthodoxy* is not *Probity*: A *sound Head* may often be consistent with a *corrupt Heart*. Good Principles therefore are by no Means

alone

alone sufficient to make Us good Men. It is not what We believe, but what We affect and incline to, that determines Us. Affections actuate and govern the Men, insomuch that Religion, however really and fully believed, has yet no Force upon Us till it sinks deep into Us, and becomes the reigning Passion of our Hearts. This is Fact, and the Truth and Certainty of it is What We find and feel by Experience.

I will not however conceal an Objection which seems to run counter to our main Position. It may be thought that our irregular Actions are rather ultimately resolvable into the false Judgments which We make, than into Affection, or Inclination; and that the Head is first tainted, and then the Heart. For, It may be asked, why Any Man is inclined to One Thing more than to Another? Is it not because He first believes, or judges it to be good for Him? It is a Maxim with Divines and Moralists, that We cannot chuse Evil but under the Notion of Good, having a Principle of Self-love within; and that therefore there must be some Error in Judgment, before there can be any in Practice. This is the Objection in its full Force; and I shall endeavour next as fully to answer it.—It may be allowed, that Some Error in Judgment always precedes every Error in Practice: And it is nevertheless true, that our irregular Acts are ultimately resolvable into Affection and Inclination; because the Error, both of Judgment and Practice, is owing to the Corruption of the Heart. The Progress of the Mind in such Cases seems to be this. When some Sensible Good is presented to the Eye, or to the Mind, the Man judges it to be agreeable, or pleasant to the Sense; and so far judges right. Yet This alone would not determine his Choice, because other Considerations, more, or more weighty, might keep Him from it. But He dwells upon the Thought 'till his Heart is inflamed: Then He chuses, and not 'till then. If He still retained an Indifference towards it, as He easily might; if He did not grow uneasy and impatient for it; He would stay and consider, would examine all the Consequences, and be well assured not only that the Thing is pleasant to Sense, or good in Part, but that it is good in the Whole, simply and absolutely so, before He chuses it. But the Drift and Bent of his Soul leaning too much towards it, He cuts off all farther Consideration, and is precipitately determined by it. Thus the Judgment upon which the Man acts, follows the irregular Inclination. It is the Desire, the Impatience, the Passion of his Heart that hurries Him into it. His judging the Thing to be good in Part, or in some Respect, is indeed antecedent to the Inclination, in Order of Nature; but his judging it to be good in the Whole,

entirely so, and therefore *eligible*, is *after* it. In a Word, He believes That to be *best*, and *most eligible*, Which He most inclines to; and upon This He acts. *Inclination*, at length, is the *ruling Principle*; his *Heart* betrays Him.

This is applicable in a thousand Cases, where Men prefer *temporal* to *eternal* Happiness. For though they act according to their *present Judgment*, and, as They think, *best for Themselves*; yet that *present Judgment* is contrary to their cooler *Sentiments* of Things, and proceeds entirely from the *reigning Passion* of the *Heart*. Here then We may distinguish between the *habitual* and the *occasional* Judgments which are made. The Former are What We call *settled Principles*, the Work of Reason and Thought, when the Mind is cool and sober: The Latter are only *particular Judgments* proceeding from some *Affection* or *Passion*, as Temptations come in Mens Way, or as Occasion serves. To illustrate This by an Instance,

Any Man who looks into his Bible knows that *Adultery*, or *Drunkenness*, is a great and crying Sin; and cannot but judge it infinitely better to abstain from it, than to run the Risque of everlasting Damnation. These are his cool and sober Sentiments, the *habitual* and *standing Judgment* of his Mind. Yet notwithstanding, through the Prevalency of his *Lusts* and *Passions*, He does the very Thing which He *condemns*; and, by so doing, shews that his *Heart* has betrayed Him into a *precipitate Judgment*, contrary to What his *Reason* and *Conscience* dictate to Him. Thus He *acts against Principle*, being driven on by a *prevailing Passion*; and *chuses* in that *particular Instance*, and on that Occasion, What He *acknowledges*, in the *general*, ought never to be chosen. This is the *Fallacy* by which Many so frequently and so fatally deceive their own Souls, by which they *elude* and defeat the *settled Judgments* of their own Minds, and act counter to those good and sound Principles which They believe and maintain. This being a Matter of great Importance, and well worth the considering, it may not be amiss to inquire a little farther into it; that We may the more clearly understand by what Sort of Charm or Inchantment our Inclinations and Affections can so work upon Us, as to make Us judge and act so inconsistently with Our Selves. It must be either by our *leaving out*, or *taking in*, Something very differently from What We do when We form a *true* and *right Judgment*. Now, the Mystery of the Case seems, for the most part, to lie in one or more of the three following Particulars.

First,

First, Either We think not at all, for the Time, of the *general* Principles which We hold, but suffer them to lie dormant and useless to Us.

Secondly, Or, if We think of them, We neglect to apply them to our own *particular* Case, imagining Our Selves to be unconcerned in them.

Thirdly, Or, if We do apply them, and consequently are self-condemned, and sensible of it; yet We hope to *repent* and to be saved notwithstanding.

First, It may often happen that Men, blinded with *Passion*, and hurried on by their *Appetite*, may, for the Time, *entirely forget* the *good Principles* which They have. The present Object so fills and takes up the Mind, that there is no Room or Place left for any Thing else. The Man is not at Leisure to start Difficulties, or raise Scruples. The Temptation is too near, too importunate and pressing, to give any Leave to think or recollect. The Mind, in such Cases, is too eager and too impatient to consider any Thing beyond the present. Thus there being an Appearance of Good, but no Apprehension of Evil to counter-balance it; Reasons for the Thing, and no Reasons thought on against it; *Sense* pleading warmly on one Hand, while *Reason* and *Religion* are asleep on the other; Such being the Case, it is easy to imagine how the Man must determine. He judges indeed right enough upon the *present Appearance* of Things: But it is his *own Fault* that Things do not appear otherwise. It is his *Passion* that gives the false Colour to the Object, and He is answerable for letting it have the Ascendant over Him, so far as to stupify and render useless those rational Faculties which God has given Him.

Secondly, A *Second* Case is, when We do not entirely forget the good Principles which We have learned, but only neglect to apply them to our *own particular Case*.

This comes to pass as often as Men content Themselves with a loose and superficial Knowledge of their own Case, or Temper; not examining carefully and impartially into Either. *Partiality*, proceeding from Self-Flattery or mistaken Self-Love, perverts their *Judgment*; insomuch that They think favourably of Themselves, while They do the very same Things which They condemn in Others: And it contributes very much towards their putting this Cheat upon Themselves, that they are able to find out some plausible Name or Colour for their Vices.

A Man may be very sensible that *Covetousness*, for Instance, is Idolatry, and highly displeasing to Almighty God: But

when the Case comes to be his own, He calls it not *Covetousness*, but *Frugality*. Another believes *Pride* to be an abominable Vice, equally hateful to God and Man: But still his own *Pride* has no such appearing Malignity in it: It is, with Him, Nothing but *Magnanimity* and Greatness of Soul. A Third is firmly persuaded that all *Rancour* and *Malice*, *Bitterness* and *Revenge*, are utterly repugnant to God's Word, and diametrically opposite to the Genius and Spirit of the Gospel: But when He Himself becomes guilty, He is not sensible of any *Rancour* or *Malice*, *Bitterness* or *Revenge*; He is a Stranger to such Abominations, washes his Hands of them, and calls his own Madness a *just Resentment*, for a Terror to Offenders, and for the Good of the World. To add an Example or two for farther Illustration. A bigotted *Romanist*, warmed with a Spirit of *Persecution*, wreaks his Spleen, Revenge, and Rage, trampling on the Laws of Humanity, as well as on the Precepts of the Gospel; and yet flatters Himself, all the while, that He is doing no Harm, vainly imagining that it is Nothing but a *laudable* and becoming *Earnestness* for his *Holy Religion*. A zealous *Party-Man*, while He is endeavouring to turn the World upside down, and almost to tear human Society in Pieces; while He deals about Calumnies with an undistinguishing Hand, throws his Arrows and Firebrands abroad without Mercy, and discovers all the ill Qualities One should expect to meet with in an Angel of Darkness; yet very gravely puts all to the Account of the *Cause* He is engaged in; and thinks nothing can be amiss which may promote the Measures and Interests of his *Party*.

Such are the *false Judgments* which Men ordinarily make, in Compliance with their *reigning Passions*. They act against their *settled Judgment* and Principles, and are not aware that They do so. They do not carefully examine the Pulse of their own *Hearts*: They know not upon what *Springs* They move, nor consider the *Tendency* of their Actions. Their *general Notices* of Good and Evil are right and just; and They can apply them readily to every Case but their own. There, *Partiality* and fond *Self-love* forbid too strict Enquiry, and prevent the Use and *Application* of their Principles. As Many see no Blemishes in their *Friends*, or else invent some kind Excuses, or Cover for Them: So These do with *Themselves*. Their Faults would be very great Ones, even *Themselves* being Judges, if They were not their own.

Thirdly, There is a *Third Way* which Many have of eluding the Force of their Principles, as effectual as Any, and indeed the

the most dangerous of all. When a Case is too flagrant, and too notoriously wicked, to admit of the more refined Ways of evading and frustrating the plain Rules of the Gospel; They have this Reserve still, that They hope to repent some time or other, and to be saved at last. This prevails most with Those who are addicted to the Sins of the Body, which are too gross and too scandalous to admit of those colourable Pretences that are often made for the more gross and lurking Vices of the Heart. These Men are sensible that They sin against God, and that They expose Themselves to the Danger of Hell-fire. But while They think the Danger remote and distant, and that They have it in their Power to prevent it when They please: while They have plausible Hopes (and what will They not think or hope, upon a Principle of Self-love, and infatuated by a predominant Passion?) that They may enjoy their sinful Pleasures, and arrive at Heaven notwithstanding: I say, while They think thus, there is Nothing in Human Nature forbidding such a Choice; a Man may easily be determined so to act; and Thousands are so determined every Day.

Thus We see how the *Issues of Life* spring from the Heart, from the predominant *Affections* and *Inclinations*, in Contradiction to their *standing Principles*. And there is no Difficulty in solving the Problem, How it comes to pass, that the Generality of Christians, with all their Reason and Understanding, and good Principles about Them, yet *practise* Nothing less than the Rules of their most Holy Religion. If They had not contrived those, or the like Ways of *holding the Truth in Unrighteousness*, of retaining their *Principles* and their *Lusts* together; then indeed there would be many more *Infidels* than there really now are. For, if *Affections* were importunate and clamorous against *Principles*, and there were no other Way to gratify them, and withal to make the Mind easy; Men would then bend all their Aims to work themselves up into a *Dis-belief* of their *Principles*, and take their last Refuge in *Deism*, or even *Atheism*. Some Benefit we reap from the very Mischief whereof I have been complaining. We owe to it, in a great Measure, That outward Form and Face of Religion which is still kept up in the World. For if the Point lay here, that every Man must of Necessity be either a *Christian in Deed and in Truth*, agreeably to his Principles, or else renounce his Principles, and turn *Infidel*; it is obvious and easy to imagine what Condition the World must have been in, long before this Time. But I proceed to my *Second general Head*;

II.

To shew what is implied and contained in the *Precept* of the Text: *To keep the Heart with all Diligence*. Having seen how much depends on the Disposition of the *Heart*; the Reason and the Necessity of the Precept must be very apparent: And We have Nothing now left to do, but to enquire What it contains, or whereof it consists. It must consist of *two Parts*, or Offices. 1. *To preserve our good Dispositions*; and 2. *To correct our bad Ones*. And These again will each of them imply two other Things. *First*, A frequent Examination of our own Hearts; and, *Secondly*, A constant Endeavour to wean our Affections from this World, and to fix Them on Another.

1. The *first Part*, or Office, implied in the Precept of the Text, is to use our best Endeavours to *preserve* our *good Dispositions*, to keep up and maintain such commendable Inclinations as We find Our Selves already endowed with. This I conceive to be principally intended in the Text. The Phrase of *keeping* the Heart answers thereto; and besides, It is much more in our Power to *keep* our Hearts from going astray, than to *recover* them when once gone.

2. The *Second Part*, or Office, implied also in the Text, is to correct our *bad Inclinations*, and reduce them to Reason. This is a Matter of Labour and Difficulty, to recover a Heart, after it is gone astray, to call back the wandering Affections, and to give Them a new Turn. How far This may be within the *ordinary Power* of Man, or what Degree of *Grace* is required for it, I pretend not to determine, since it depends upon great Variety of Circumstances. If the *Heart* be the *governing Principle*, as We have before proved, It may be thought a kind of Contradiction for a Man of *Himself*, and upon his *own free Motion*, to set about the *correcting* or reforming it. How shall He correct his *reigning Inclination*, without being *inclined* to do it? And How can *any Inclination* be the *reigning One*, if there be a *superior Inclination* to reduce and *correct* it? It comes at length to This; How shall a Man be *inclined* to What He is *not inclined* to? Here lies the Difficulty: And Hence it is that we so seldom see a thorough Change of the Heart; and when We do see it, We must impute it rather to the powerful Hand of *God*, than to any Thing which a Man is able to do *of Himself*. The Inclinations of Men (humanly speaking) once estranged from
God

God and Goodness, very rarely return, but rule and prevail over the unhappy Creatures all their Lives long. No Arguments have any Weight or Force with Them; no Considerations can find Entrance; They are deaf to all Persuasion, refusing, like the deaf Adder, to *hear the Voice of the Charmer, charm He never so wisely*. When Men's *Hearts* and Affections are once gone off to this Degree, their Damnation is certain; unless it please God to visit Them in some remarkable Manner, and to give a Turn to their Thoughts. In the General, We may say, according as the *Heart* is more or less abandoned, so the *State of the Man* is either better or worse, and his Recovery more or less doubtful. All the Hold that any Instructions or Advices have upon Him, lies in This, that He is incessantly desirous of his *own Happiness*: And though He has placed his Affections chiefly upon temporal Good, yet some Degree of Inclination towards eternal Happiness may abide and continue with Him. The Embers are not quite dead, but may some time or other kindle afresh, and break out into a Flame. To come out of Figure and Metaphor, I apprehend the Matter to lie plainly thus: Though wicked Men be under the Influence of their corrupt, prevailing Inclinations, in the ordinary Course of their Lives; yet at some certain Seasons, and especially in the Absence of Temptations, their enchanted Reason and Understanding may recover its due Force and Spring, may represent the ill Consequences of a wicked Course, and press the Consideration thereof close, and home: And They may instantly resolve upon Ways and Means to prevent any such Delusion and Infatuation for the Time to come. This I suppose to be ordinarily in the Power of the Mind of Man, not excluding the Influences of God's Grace co-operating with Him.

It may be thought, perhaps, that, in What hath been said, I have too much heightened or magnified the Difficulty of correcting the Heart, and that there is little or no Difficulty in the Thing. For, since God's Grace is never wanting, but when Men are wanting to Themselves, Any Man may repent whensoever He will. This I admit. But is it so easy a Matter for a Man to will what He has no Mind to? If the Man be willing, the Thing is as good as done: But There lies the Difficulty. The Will itself, the first Mover, the Spring of Action, is the very Thing that wants to be set right; and What shall do This? If it be thought that a Principle of Reason, with which Man is endowed, is sufficient for all; the Difficulty still returns, how the Will, enslaved to Passions, shall incline to follow Reason. Whoever well considers Human

man Nature, and how the Generality of Mankind must be kept in Awe by temporal Penalties, or that otherwise the World would immediately run into the utmost Confusion; will be apt to believe, that it is a very rare and uncommon Talent, to be ever ready and *willing* to hearken to *Reason*. It is but throwing out so many empty Words, to say a Man can do this, or thus, *if He will*. A Man *may* wantonly throw Himself off from a Precipice without the least *Reason* for it: Or He *may* put Himself to extreme Torture upon a *Rack*, without any *Motive* for doing it: Or *may* do Things on purpose to make Himself *contemptible* or *miserable* all his Life long: All this a Man *may* do if He *will*; He has a *physical* Power of acting in this Manner, and That is all: But He can never *exercise* this Power in such Manner, because he can never have the *Will* to do it, there being no Principle in Human Nature to excite Him to it. Now, though the Aversion which some Persons have to Repentance and Holiness of Life, be not the same in *Degree* with such as I have mentioned; yet it may be very great, strong, and forcible: And though it be true, that They *may* repent if They *will*, yet it may be no less true, that, in those Circumstances, They cannot of Themselves have the *Will* to do it, nor without some extraordinary Grace preventing and assisting in it. However, as I before said, There is always a Principle in our Nature, a *Desire of Happiness*, which may, at some Time or other, call Men off from their evil Courses; and It will generally operate more or less, according as it hath run a longer or a shorter Time, in a wrong Channel. But, not to weary your Patience longer with Matters of an abstract Nature, whether the Difficulty of correcting bad Inclinations be greater or less, We may proceed to lay down the Means proper for it: And they are the same, in a great Measure, with those that are requisite for preserving good Ones, as before mentioned.

The *first* is, a *frequent Examination of our own Hearts*. Such as find in Themselves an Inclination to make this first Step, will not, very probably, be much averse to going farther. Without *examining*, We can never perfectly know What is Good or Bad in us; What We ought to preserve, and What to correct. It requires serious Reflection and dwelling much at Home, to understand Our Selves thoroughly. We ought to search and examine upon what *Springs* our *Hearts* move; whether our Views and Purposes be chiefly *religious*, or *secular*; and, if *secular*, what they *are*, and from whence they *arise*. When there are several Motives to the same Thing (as it often happens) it should be considered, whether the *prevailing* one be

be religious. This is easily known, by setting aside all that is *secular* and *temporal*, and then trying the Strength of *spiritual* Motives. Thus, for Instance: If Any One would know whether he gives Alms upon a true *Christian* Principle, let Him only consider, whether He takes the same Satisfaction in a *private*, as in a *public* Charity, and his Question is answered. Or if a Man would know whether He publishes any Work out of a sincere Love to Truth, and a Desire to improve the World (as every Writer pretends) let Him think and consider, whether he should be willing publickly to retract an Error which might otherwise do Mischief; and He will soon perceive how his *Heart* moves. The same Method will serve for a thousand other Cases. There is another Way of discovering how We stand affected; and That is, by observing the Stream and Current of our *Passions*. As the *Ambitious* Man's Passions turn upon *Honour* and *Power*, the *Libertine's* upon *sensual Pleasures*, and the *Covetous* Man's upon *Money*; so the *Religious* Man's Passions hang chiefly upon What relates to his *eternal Salvation*. And it will be easy for Him to observe, whether He be as heartily sorry for his *Sins*, as for any *worldly Losses*, *Crosses*, or *Disappointments*; and whether He be as *solicitous* about the *Former*, as He is about the *Latter*. All the *Passions* of our Souls are Nothing else but so many different Expressions of the Love We have for *Our Selves*: And It may be seen from thence how our *Self-love* stands directed; whether to this World or a Better, and to which We are most strongly and invincibly attached.

A little Use and Observation this Way will soon give a Man a just Idea of Himself.

If He finds his Inclinations and Dispositions to be *right and good in the main*; He is next to observe where they are *most apt to step awry*, and there He is to set a *double Guard*, as it were to defend the *weak Side*. If He perceives them to be solely, or chiefly, *secular*; it concerns Him to discover the *reigning Passion* which gives the Law to the Rest; whether it be for *Riches*, *Honours*, or *Pleasures*: And this will easily be understood from the Stream of his *Thoughts*, the Course of his *Pursuits*, and the constant Tenor of his Life and Conversation. When This is done, the last Part of this Office is to trace the Thing up to its *Fountain-Head*, to see from whence such Disposition, or Affection arises: Whether from *Temper* or *Constitution* of Body, or from *Education*, *Authority*, *Example*, or *Custom*; from the *Occupation* he pursues, the *Company* He keeps, the *Books* He reads, or any Thing of like Nature,

Nature. This seems to be the proper Order and Method of examining our *Hearts*, if We are desirous to be thoroughly acquainted with our Own Selves.

When We have thus discovered *What is amiss*, and *Whence it arises*; Nothing remains but to consider of Ways and Means proper to *correct* it. Many good Rules and Directions might be offered to this Purpose: But instead of *particular Rules*, which vary according to Mens *particular Circumstances*, It may suffice to lay down one *general Rule*, which may equally serve either for preserving good Dispositions, or reforming bad Ones; and That is,

Secondly and lastly, A Constant Endeavour to wean our Affections from This World, and to fix them firmly on a better. Happiness, in general, We all pursue; eagerly, constantly, incessantly. Thus far We All agree, down from the Prince to the Peasant. But then We divide in the Choice of the *Means*, or of the *Object*; Some pursuing eternal Happiness, Most *temporal* only, or however chiefly: And These sub-divide again into almost as many Kinds as the World affords Vanities. All the Difference between an Evil Man and a good Man is, that the Evil Man makes *this World* his *chief*, or *only Aim*; while the Good Man makes the World to come his principal Concern, and Religion is the reigning *Passion* of his Heart. The different Degrees of Goodness depend very much upon keeping the Eye more or less fixed upon *That*, the ultimate End and Design of all their Labours and Endeavours. Such as lean with all the Weight and Tendency of their Minds towards Heaven, are, of Course, solicitous and anxious to know whether their *Principles* and *Practices* agree together. They will not suffer Themselves to be imposed on, in a Matter of so great Importance: But carefully watch and guard against all those little *Fallacies* which thoughtless Men are drawn in by, to make *particular Judgments* contrary to their *standing Persuasions*. In a Word, as *worldly Men* are solicitous to secure a firm and strong Title to their *Estates* or *Honours*; so the *Children of Light* are particularly watchful to make their *Calling and Election sure*. All this naturally flows from a Heart fixed upon Heaven and eternal Happiness: And such a Disposition once firmly rooted and grounded, hardly needs any farther Rules. We easily perceive what We have to do, after We have fixed our Aims and settled our main Designs. All the Sins and Irregularities, either of our Passions or our Lives, ultimately terminate in our *Inclination* to some *temporal Good*, or *Aversion* to some *temporal Evil*; that is, in our Love of this present World. There lies the Root and
Source

Source of all the Distempers of our Minds. Wherefore, the true, the only Remedy must be, to disentangle the Mind, as much as possible, from Things below; and to seek those Things which are above. If it be asked, How This must be done? The ready Answer is; By *Retirement*, by *Recollection*, by *Reading*, and especially by *Praying*. This is the Way to make distant Things have the same Force upon Us as if they were near at Hand, and Things to come as if they were now present.

If Want of *Leisure* be pleaded by Men of Action and Business, it is a shrewd Presumption that They have never yet seriously considered What *everlasting Happiness*, and *everlasting Misery* import. However, it is not to be expected that either All, or the greater Part of our Time should be laid out in religious Exercises, properly so called. A great deal less may suffice. God designed us for *Action* and Business: Our Circumstances here, the Health of our Bodies, and the Vigour of our Minds require it, and can hardly be kept up without it. If the *Heart* be once *set right*, and the *Aim well-directed*; Business itself is but another Kind of *religious Exercise*, and *doing good in our Station*, is *serving God*. It is the *Intention* which *sanctifies it*, while the *End* proposed is the *Glory of God*, and the *Good of Mankind*.

To conclude; Let Us be ever careful so to use, and so to enjoy this World, as neither to be enchanted, nor enamoured with it: Always remembring, that it is an Introduction only to Another, that it will soon be over, and that *Eternity* hangs upon it.



S E R M O N V.

Wicked Men, the providential Instruments of
Good.

The *First* Sermon on this Subject.

PROV. XVI. 4.

*The Lord hath made all Things for Himself; yea even the Wicked
for the Day of Evil.*

THIS wise Saying of King SOLOMON, if it be but rightly understood, is full of excellent Matter, and most useful Instruction, such as every good Man will constantly have upon his Mind. But the Words, as they run in our Version, are not altogether so clear as they might have been; for which Reason it will be necessary, here in the Entrance, first to open and explain the Meaning of the Text; that so We may come at the Subject-matter to be discoursed upon. The Verse going before the Text, having a Relation to it, will be of Use to point out to Us its real and full Meaning. *Commit thy Works unto the Lord, and thy Thoughts shall be established.* Which Words are an Exhortation to Us, to repose our whole Trust and Confidence in God's good Providence, and to submit all our Thoughts and Resolutions to Him, as upon Whom alone the Success of them, and their Accomplishment depend. Then follows: *The Lord hath made all Things for Himself; yea even the Wicked for the Day of Evil;* that is, for executing Vengeance where God pleases. All Things are in God's Hands, and He makes Use of all Things as he pleases; for He created them all: Yea even the wickedest and worst of Men, They are his
Creatures

Creatures too, and under his Direction and Contrall: However They may be set upon Mischief, They can proceed no farther than God permits; being Instruments only in his Hand, to afflict Others, and to bring Evil upon Them. When He is disposed to shield and protect good Men, then He restrains and ties up those Engines of Mischief: But at other Times, when He is pleased either to exercise good Men with Trials, or to punish the Wicked, He then lets loose those Ministers of Wrath, to execute his Discipline, or his Vengeance in the Earth. And because all the Instruments of Mischief are thus in God's Hands, and must have Commission or Leave for every Step They take; therefore all Kinds of Calamities or Disasters that befall Mankind, are ascribed to God, as their Sovereign Author, being the Supreme Arbitrator and Disposer of all Events. To which Purpose, God says, by his Prophet ISAIAH, *I form the Light, and create Darknes; I make Peace, and create Evil.*† And, by the Prophet AMOS, *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord haib not done it?*‡ In the Lamentations of the Prophet JEREMIAH it is expressed thus: *Who is He that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the Mouth of the most High proceedeth not Evil and Good?*§ By which it is intimated, that both prosperous and calamitous Events are to be ascribed to God's overruling Providence. The same Thought occurred to holy JOB under his Troubles: *Shall We receive Good, says He, at the Hand of God, and shall We not receive Evil?*¶ The same Thing is frequently inculcated in several other Places of Holy Scripture, too long to mention: And the main Design of all was to instill this instructive Lesson into the Minds of Men; that as, on One Hand, They could have no Reason to hope for any Thing good but from God; so, on the Other Hand, They could have no just Ground to fear any Evil but from the same Divine Being. Mankind were very apt to suspect, that there were two opposite Powers in the World, One the Fountain of Good, and the Other the Fountain of Mischief: This Notion appears to have been very ancient among the Persians, and among the Egyptians before Them. The Consequence of which was, that They thought Themselves obliged to worship and adore Both the Rival Powers; One, in Expectation to receive Good from Him; and the Other, as it is said of the Indians at this Day, for Fear He should do Them Harm. This is a superstitious

† Isa. xiv. 7. ‡ Amos iii. 6. § Lam. iii. 37, 38. ¶ Job ii. 10.

Superstitious and dangerous Notion, which the Scripture every where obviates, by teaching that both *Good* and *Evil*, both *Prosperity* and *Adversity*, proceed from the *same Fountain*, and are both to be ascribed to one and the same God. For though evil Angels, or wicked Men, may be the Contrivers and Executors of innumerable Mischiefs; yet, considering that They are God's Creatures, and both contrive and act under Restraint, and under Correction, as God sees fit, They are to be looked upon as God's Instruments in all that They effect; as much as wild Beasts, or Fire, or Storms, or Floods, or any Thing of like Kind: They are but the Ministers of God's Wrath in all that They accomplish, while They see not the End which God aims at in it, but pursue their own wicked Devices. They do not understand how God makes Use of their rage, or Malice, to serve his own wise Purposes: They have quite other Views and Designs from what God has, and imagine only that They are serving their own Ends in all: But it is true nevertheless, that God serves Himself of Them as his Instruments, and permits Them to act no farther than He can turn to Good. *The Lord hath made*, and the Lord ordereth, *all Things for Himself*, to serve the Ends of his Providence; yea, even the Wicked are his Creatures, and were both made at first, and are still preserved, to execute, in a *certain Sense*, God's good Pleasure. They are the *Instruments* which God makes Use of *in the Day of Evil*, in the Day when He sends his Judgments upon Others for their Sins. Enough hath been said to shew What the *general Doctrine* of the Text is.—In discoursing farther, my Design is,

- I. To open and illustrate the *general Doctrine*, by a more *particular Explication*.
- II. To shew the *practical Use* and Improvement of it.

I.

First, I propose to open and illustrate the general Doctrine by a more particular Explication. *The Lord hath made all Things*, or (as the Words may be construed) He orders and disposes all Things so, as one Way or other to serve his own wise Purposes. Whatever second Causes there are, or however they act, still it is God, and God alone, that governs the World. His Providence is so general, large, and comprehensive, as to take in the whole Compass of the wide Universe; and it is at the same Time so very minute and particular, that the

the smallest Atoms do not escape his Notice. We are assured by our Blessed Lord, that not so much as a Sparrow falls without his Leave; and that He condescends to feed the Fowls of the Air, and to clothe the Lillies of the Field. Heaven and Earth, and Hell, are all under his Inspection. *If I ascend into Heaven, says the PSALMIST, Thou art there: If I make my Bed in Hell, behold Thou art there also.*†

All Occurrences, all Affairs whatever, are observed, regulated, conducted by Him; even Those which seem merely casual, and accidental, are in reality providential: And what We corruptly call *Chance*, is truly *Providence*. What more casual than a Lot? and yet the Wise Man tells Us in this very Chapter, that when *the Lot is cast into the Lap, the whole Disposal thereof is of the Lord.*‡ God's Government of the natural World, his conducting the Courses of Sun, Moon, and Stars, his preserving the brute Animals upon our Globe, and his endowing Them with their particular Instincts proper to every Kind, which to Them are so many stated Rules of Conduct, is highly wonderful; but yet his Government of the Moral World is much more so: And the most mysterious Part of all, is What my Text mentions with a particular Emphasis, his ordering even the Wicked in a Way consistent with *Human Liberty*, and so as to serve the Ends of his Providence, and to promote his Glory. This is a profound Speculation, to be touched upon only by Us, and that with awful Reverence. There is a great deal more in it than We are able to understand. The Fact is certain; but the *Manner how* is beyond our Comprehension. I shall therefore endeavour rather to illustrate the Fact, shewing What We are to believe or to suppose concerning it, than to give any tolerable Account *how* it is done. There can be no Mistake in conceiving, that God had his wise and gracious Views in first creating Those whom he foresaw would be wicked, and would ruin and undo Themselves. He made Men *Free Agents*, bidding Them work out their own Happiness by a *right Use* of that Liberty which He had invested Them with. Many, He foresaw, would do so, and would of Consequence arrive at a happy Immortality: And it was for Their Sakes, and for his own Glory, that He thereupon determined to create Mankind.

It was by no Means reasonable, that God should forbear creating such a Race at all, only because *Some* would be so foolish as to destroy Themselves. For why should Those, who would make a good Use of the Favour, be denied the

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Advantage,

† Psalm cxxxix. 8.

‡ Prov. xvi. 33.

Advantage, on Account only of Others who would abuse it? or why should great Numbers lose the Opportunities of making Themselves happy, because Others would, by their own Fault, abuse the same Opportunities to their own Undoing? It was undoubtedly kind and gracious in God to create Men, though *Many* of Them would prove *wicked*, because it was certain, in God's Foreknowledge, that *Many* also would be *righteous*; and so for *Their* Sakes, or for the Sake of as *Many* as would be *Such*, it was worthy of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness to make the World. In this Sense We may understand, that God made all Things, and *even the Wicked, for Himself*, and for his own Glory: It was for his Glory to create even *Such* as would be *wicked*, rather than not create Mankind at all, and so make *None* to be *happy*. But this being a deep and abstruse Meditation, and not so proper for a popular Discourse, I pass it over, and proceed to an easier Thought, which I take to be principally intended in the Text, though not very clearly expressed in our Translation; which is, that God makes Use of the wicked Men who are his Creatures, to serve the Ends of his Providence: They are all absolutely in his Hands, and under his Sovereign Controll: They can do Nothing without his Leave; and when He does give Leave, it is to serve some wise End and useful Purpose of his own, quite beside their Intention. They mean nothing but *Evil*, while God turns it to *Good*. This certainly is one of the most delightful and comfortable Theories, which a good Man can fix his Mind upon; to consider, that amidst all the seeming Distraction and Confusion in this mad World, where Wickedness prevails, and Transgressions abound; yet there is a God in Heaven, who sits, as it were, calm and undisturbed above; marks and views all that is here doing below; and not only observes, but interposes in every Action, in every Motion, in every Contrivance and Thought of the Heart, either suspending, or suffering it to proceed; and all the while so conducting its Force, or turning its Direction by secret Springs, as to make it answer What Himself intended, or had decreed, with all possible Exactness. We are by no Means able to reach the Depth of this mysterious Management; but We may take a View of some Particulars which may help towards a more distinct Idea of What is intelligible in it.

1. Let Us First consider the Power of God over the *Minds* and *Hearts* of Wicked Men. They are, without Question, perpetually bent upon Mischief, of one Kind or other. But yet God shall so over-rule, that some particular Mischiefs which

which they would be fond enough of, shall never so much as enter into their Heads. If He is pleased, for Instance, to preserve some particular Person, or Place, from their Rage and Fury; He may, He often does, prevent the very *Thought*, and turns their Minds off from pitching their Aims there.

But suppose He permits a *Thought* to come into their Minds; He may yet stifle it there, and never suffer it to proceed so far as to a *Resolution* or *Design*. A thousand Accidents may divert it, defeat it, or render it abortive, before it be formed into an *Intention* to do any Thing.

Next, suppose it carried on so far as to commence a *Resolution*; yet how easily, how suddenly, are Resolutions changed, and Designs laid aside, upon any considerable *Change* in Mind; Body, or outward Circumstances, which are all in God's Power, and at his Disposal.

But suppose farther, that with God's Leave, the *Resolution* abides, and Opportunity invites, and Circumstances favour, and a Man has all his Instruments prepared, and ready for putting the same in Execution; yet even in that *Critical Juncture*, in the very Article of Action, Providence interposes, many times, and blasts and quashes all in one Moment.

Admit farther, that the *Resolution* formed, is suffered to proceed to *Action*; yet Providence alone determines, the Time *when*, the Place *where*, with the precise *Measure* and *Degree* of all that is doing; that the Agent shall not be able to effect one Tittle, either *more* or *less*, either *contrary* to, or *different from*, what God in his wise Counsels had previously determined. *A Man's Heart deviseth his Way, but the Lord directeth his Steps*, says SOLOMON in this Chapter, Verse the 9th. The Meaning of which is, that Men may invent, design, or contrive what They please, yet the Lord Himself will have both the ordering and finishing of it in his own Hands. *Many are the Devices of Man's Heart, but the Counsel of the Lord, That shall stand*. God often executes his Counsels by the Hands of wicked Men, making Use of their Wickedness, as He sees proper, for his own Purposes; otherwise they never take Effect. We see indeed a great deal of Villainy and Wickedness in the World, and too often (as We may say) it thrives, and prospers, and triumphs; which it becomes Us to lament, and to be heartily sorry for: And yet, if We look through the Surface of Things, and go to the Bottom of the Case, We must be obliged to say, that God's Hand is in all; and though the *Wickedness* is not *his*, yet the *Success* that attends it, the *Effect* it has, is really *his doing*.

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Wicked Men, for Instance, commit Violence, rob, plunder, murder, or the like; They do it for their *own Humour*, and God suffers it for quite *other Ends*. He had determined, suppose, to take off such a Person for his Sins, to chastise Another, or to prove, try, and exercise a Third. He could command Serpents, or other noxious Animals, to do the Work: Or He could do it by Fire, or Floods, or Storms, or other Casualties: Or if by none of these, yet by Plague or Famine, by Fever or Dropsy, or other wasting Distemper: But since there are wicked Wretches in the World, full of Mischief in their Hearts, and wanting only to be let loose; God chuses, in such Cases, to make Use of Them, gives them the Reins, till He has finished his own Work by Them, and then calls Them to Account for doing it, because They did it not as *God's Work*, but as their *own*; not by his *Order*, but by his *Permission*, only; not with any View to serve or obey God, but for their own Humour or Pleasure, and for the Wickedness of their own corrupt Hearts. The Sacred History is every where full of Examples of this Kind, of God's making Use of wicked Instruments to bring about his own good and gracious Designs: Not that He could not have done the same Thing in another Way, and without Them, but as They are his Creatures, and are in his Hands, as all other Things are, He will have this Use of Them, and thus far at least serve Himself, by Them. God made Use of the Devil's Subtilty to try and prove our First Parents, Who were foolish enough to be deceived, and so fell from their Innocence. And he again made use of the Devil's Malice to prove and exercise righteous JOB; who was wise enough to stand it, and obtained a Crown of Triumph. God made use of the Wickedness of King SAUL to cut off the whole Family of *Priests* of the Race of ITHAMAR, whom he had determined to destroy long before, for the Sins of old ELI, and his two profligate Sons. God made use of the Lewdness and Pride of ABSALOM, the cursed Counsels of AHITOPHEL, and the impudent Revilings of SHIMEI, to punish King DAVID for his great Transgressions in the Matter of URIA. In like Manner, He made use of the Haughtiness and Ambition of the ASSYRIANS, to humble his own People ISRAEL; and of the BABYLONIANS, to chastise JUDAH; and then again, by the same BABYLONIANS, to crush the insolent ASSYRIANS; and of the PERSIANS to humble BABYLON, and so on. God makes Use of wicked Men as Scourges to chastise Others; and afterwards raises up *Others* to scourge *Them*; especially, if They assume and grow proud upon their Success,

cess, and take it all to Themselves, while Instruments only in the whole Thing. It is worth observing, how Almighty God, by his Prophet ISAIAH, reprov'd the proud ASSYRIAN, for his Insolence in that Kind. *I will punish the Fruit (the Vanity) of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the Glory of his high looks**. *Shall the Axe boast itself against Him that beweth therewith? or shall the Saw magnify itself against Him that shaketh it†?* The Prophet here compares the Proud ASSYRIAN to an *Axe*, or a *Saw*, in the Hand of a Workman: And such are all wicked Men in the Hands of God, whenever He is pleas'd to use Them as Instruments to execute his Vengeance upon Sinners, or his Discipline upon good Men. I shall mention but one Case more; a most famous one it is, where God made Use of wicked Instruments to effect his Purposes: It was in the happy Redemption of Mankind by the Death of CHRIST, God made Use of the Malice of the JEWS, and the Treachery of JUDAS, to bring it about; while, notwithstanding, He took most exemplary Vengeance both upon JUDAS and Them, for their unparallel'd Wickedness in doing it. For, *their* Part in the Thing was base, vile, and execrable; and the *Good* that was in it, was all *God's*.

But Some perhaps may be bold to ask, whether God's making Use of the Sins of Men, does not look like *concurring with, and countenancing* their Iniquities? No, by no Means. For, herein chiefly is seen the marvellous Perfection of Divine Wisdom, to make such Use of Sinners, undefiled with their Sins, to serve Himself of their Impurities, remaining all the while infinitely pure. It is not that He needs Mens Sins, or makes them; for He could bring about his all-wise Purposes without such Instruments: But as Men by abusing their Liberty of Choice (proper to Free-Agents) will of Course commit Sins, which in their own Nature and Tendency are most pernicious, threatening Nothing but Destruction and Misery to the World; in this Case, God Himself undertakes so to controll, curb, and regulate this mischievous Quality, that it shall not disturb the Peace and Harmony of the World farther than is useful for the Ends of Discipline; but shall be so directed, and governed, as to prove, in the Event, serviceable and beneficial to the World; and shall at length be hurtful to None, but to the Authors and Contrivers of it, Who must suffer for it. Such is the admirable and most adorable Conduct of Divine Providence, in bringing *Good* out of *Evil*, and turning the rankest Poisons

into wholesome and salutary Medicines. The Sum then is, that all Things whatever, and even Moral Agents, and the greatest Sinners, are under the secret Controll of Divine Providence. God governs the World at all Times: He would not have made such Creatures, but that He well knew how to curb, and manage Them. He has Them all under his Command, as much as He has the Waves of the Sea, or the Tempests of the Air. He sets Bounds and Compass to the Exorbitancies of the Wicked. He bridles Them by Laws and Government, and by the incessant Labours of Good Men; and yet, more immediately, by his secret Power over their Hearts and Wills, and over all their Faculties; as well as over all Occurrences, and all second Causes through the whole Universe: And if He still affords Them Compass enough to range in; yet, notwithstanding, He rules over Them, with so strict and steady a Hand, that they cannot move a Step but by his Leave, nor do a single Act but what shall be turned to good Effect, and shall be made to serve some wise and beneficial Purpose of Divine Justice, or Divine Mercy and Grace in the End. So much for this Article. The explaining of This important Matter has carried Me so far, that I have no Room left to do Justice to my *Second Head* of Discourse; wherein I proposed to shew the *practical Use* and Improvement of the present Meditation: And That also is important, and well deserving a distinct Enquiry at large; wherefore I shall wave it for the present, and, in the mean while, leave the Subject to your own Reflections.



S E R M O N VI.

Wicked Men, the providential Instruments of
Good.

The *Second* Sermon on this Subject.

PROV. XVI. 4.

*The Lord hath made all Things for Himself; yea even the Wicked
for the Day of Evil.*

IN a Former Discourse upon these Words, I shewed their Meaning to be This: That as God made all Things by his Power, so He governs all Things by his Providence; and that He serves his own wise Ends and Uses of all Things, and all Men; yea even of wicked Men, Whom He makes the Ministers of his Wrath, and the Executioners of his *Vengeance*, in his Day of Visitation, when He comes to punish bad Men; or else of his *Discipline*, when He designs only to prove and exercise good Men. Having thus opened the *general* Meaning of the Text, I next proposed, in the further Prosecution of it,

- I. To open and illustrate the *general Doctrine*, by a more *particular Explication*.
- II. To shew the *practical Use* and Improvement of it.

In treating of the *First*, I shewed, by an Enumeration of Particulars, how the whole Universe, with all Things in it, are in God's Hands, and all second Causes steered and con-

ducted by his over-ruling Providence. But because the most material Consideration of all, which the Text itself lays the greatest Emphasis upon, and which most wanted explaining, was the *Divine Conduct*, with Respect to the Thoughts, Words, or Actions of *wicked Men*; I therefore dwelt more particularly upon that Article, endeavouring both to prove the Thing by Reason and by Examples; and next to account in some Measure for it. I proceed to the *Second Thing* proposed; namely, to shew the *practical Use* and Improvement of the Doctrine before proved.

II.

I. I will begin with a practical Inference which SOLOMON Himself mentions in the Verse before my Text, and for the Sake of which He subjoined the Text itself. The practical Inference which I mean, in his Words runs thus: *Commit thy Works unto the Lord, and thy Thoughts shall be established.*† For if it be God that governs the World, and if all Things depend upon his wise and good Providence; it is very manifest, that it is both our Duty and Interest to submit all our Concerns to Him, upon Whom all Success, and every Blessing depend. If We would have our Designs take, and our Schemes prosper; the Way certainly is to make an Interest to Him Who alone can prosper them, and Who alone can blast them. We ought in every Undertaking to implore the Divine Blessing, and to commit the Care of it, and the Success, to Him; Who, if He approves of it, will bring it to pass; or if He be against it, not all the Powers in Heaven, or in Hell, can effect it.

But here perhaps a Question may arise about the Use of *Means*, and the Necessity or Serviceableness of *Human Care* or Industry, for the compassing any honest and just Designs. For it may seem, at first View, that, if God has determined to bring the Thing to Effect, Human Care and Industry are superseded: Or, if God has determined otherwise, then all Endeavours are fruitless and vain.

But to This I answer, that *Miracles* are not to be expected in the ordinary Course of Affairs; neither does God ordinarily bestow his Blessings upon Men, but in the Use of such prudent and honest *Means* as He Himself has prescribed. For, though no Human Means can ever certainly promise, or, properly speaking, *procure* Success (which depends upon God alone)

† Prov. xvi. 3,

alone) yet *Means* must be used, as being the *Conditions*, without the Use of which, God will not ordinarily grant his Assistance. *Success* in Affairs is proposed by God, as the *Reward* consequent upon proper *Care* and *Application*: And though the *Reward* does not always follow upon the Use of the *Means* (God for wise Reasons ordering otherwise) yet *Means* are necessary to procure *Success* at all, in ordinary Cases: For God suspends his Blessings upon Mens Submission to the Methods he has appointed. If We suppose at any Time that God has determined thus, or thus, (which yet We are ignorant of;) We ought to suppose, at the same time, that He has so determined, upon a View of the Use of the ordinary *Means* proper; and therefore, instead of loitering, or neglecting the *Means*, We ought to use all Diligence and Care in applying them. In the New Testament, You will find a very remarkable Instance to our present Purpose. St. PAUL, being on Ship-board at a Time when there was a great Tempest in the Sea, had an *Angel* sent from Heaven to assure Him, that there would, in the Event, be *no Loss of any Man's Life*; as indeed it proved; But notwithstanding this *infallible Assurance*, which He had received from Heaven, and declared to the whole Crew; a little after, upon a Dispute that happened, whether to stay in the Ship, or flee out, He as peremptorily tells Them, that except They staid in the Ship, They *could not be saved*†. So *necessary* was it to use the *proper Means*, though *secure* of the Event by infallible Prediction; because indeed the Certainty of the Event *supposed* the Certainty of the *Means* to be used, and *One* implied and included the *Other*. *Means* therefore are to be used; and We are to look up to God for the *Success*: Which should make Us careful to use no *Means* but such as are strictly honest and pious, upon which We are secure to have God for our Friend; and then, most undoubtedly, He will either accomplish What We aim at; or do What, in the End, will be better for Us. So much for the first practical Inference, which is *general*, drawn from the Consideration that all Things are God's, and that He directs, or moderates, as Supreme Arbitrator in all Affairs, in all Occurrences whatsoever.

2. The next practical Inference I shall take Notice of, is drawn from the Consideration of God's controlling and bridling wicked Men in all their Machinations, never giving the Reins to Them, but when He has some wise End and Purpose of his own to serve by Them; either Making Them Ministers of his Justice when He is pleased to punish, or Instruments

† Acts xxvii. 31.

struments of Discipline, when He is pleased to prove and exercise good Men.

This Consideration, if carefully pursued as it ought to be, may afford Matter of Comfort to good Men, and may be of excellent Use, many Ways, for the regulating both our Judgment and Practice.

From hence We may learn, never to be afraid either of wicked Men, or of Devils; but to fear God, and Him only. Wicked Men, however malicious or mischievous, are yet weak in Themselves. They are under Correction and Restraint. They are held, as it were, with Bit and Bridle, from falling upon any Man; and can do Nothing till God looses and slackens the Reins. Fear not the Men Themselves, Who have neither Breath, nor Life, nor Limbs, nor Thought, at their own Disposal: but fear Him Who alone has the Command of all, and does as He pleases. Strictly speaking, wicked Men, or Devils, can never afflict Us: But God may afflict Us by Them. He may make Use of Them as *Saws*, or as *Axes* or *Hammers* (as The Prophet ISAIAH intimates) to smite, wound, or to destroy Us. But They are Instruments only in all that They can do, Instruments in the Hands of God, and it is He only that can hurt Us. He can do it by Fire, or Floods, or Tempests without, or by Diseases and Distempers within. He can afflict Us as well by wild Beasts, or Serpents, or any venomous Creatures, as by wicked Men; and They are All equally under his Power, and either afflict or forbear, according as He in his wise Providence orders. Of Him therefore be afraid, and in Him be your Dread, and in None other; for all centers and terminates in Him. No Affliction can overtake Us, but by his Direction and Permission; and He is constantly upon the Watch, sees what is doing, nay more, conducts and governs the Event. To what Purpose is it to be afraid of mere Men, unless We imagine, that God will take Advantage of Us by their Means? But if That be the Case, how many thousand Ways are there besides, for God to fall upon Us, whenever He is pleased to take Advantage of Us, and is disposed to afflict Us! There is no Security against Him, when He pleases to visit Us: But against every Thing else there is; by trusting in God, and committing Our Selves solely to Him.

A Further Use and Improvement deducible from the same Principle, is, to refer all the hard Usage, all the Injuries, or Troubles We meet with from Men, to God the Author of them. Men may deal unjustly, vilely, barbarously by Us, when God permits; And when such Cases happen,
We

We should not look only to the *second* Causes, which are merely *Instruments*, but to God the Sovereign Disposer. Men may do very wickedly in taking our Goods which They have no Right to, in aspersing our good Names by Slander or Calumny, or in committing Violence upon our Persons, which are not under their Authority: But God has an unalienable Right, and Power over our Goods, Reputation, or Persons; over our Minds, Bodies, or Estates; and over all that belongs to Us; to deprive Us of any Part, or of the Whole at Pleasure: And What Men cannot do to Us without the greatest Iniquity, God may permit to be done, with all the Justice imaginable; or perhaps is even kind and gracious in so ordering. Whenever therefore We receive any considerable Injuries from Men, the Way is, to turn our Eyes from Them, and raise our Thoughts higher up to God that governs Them, and Us too. Consider why, or for what Cause God sends Us these Troubles; search and examine well and wisely, upon what Errand they come. Think, whether We have not been guilty of some great Offences, which have drawn down these sore Judgments upon Us. Examine and search diligently whether they are sent by way of Punishment, or for Trial only and farther Improvement: Whether to lead us to Repentance of some gross Sins, or whether only to chastise Us for smaller Failings; to wean our Affections more and more from the World; to exercise our Patience, and improve our Virtues to a higher Degree here, in order to arrive at greater Degrees of Glory hereafter. This Kind of *Self-Examination*, on such Occasions, is much better Employment for Us, than complaining of the hard Usage, and stirring our Passions up against the Men who have injured Us. What said DAVID to SHIMEI, who had reviled and cursed Him in a most insolent Manner, and who deserved to die the Death for doing so? DAVID was sensible that God's Hand was in it, and that it was He Who had brought that Affliction, that Shame, that Reproach upon Him, for the Iniquity He had been guilty of in the Matter of *URIAH*. For this Reason, He put up the Affront, and would not suffer the mad Reviler to be punished as He really deserved. *The Lord, says He, hath said unto Him, Curse DAVID. Let Him alone, and let Him curse; for the Lord hath bidden Him.* A very wise, and a just Reflection. Not that the Lord had directly ordered SHIMEI to curse DAVID, neither did DAVID so mean: But the Lord had let SHIMEI loose to revile and blaspheme, as his own brutal Temper prompted Him, and God gave Him an Opportunity

Opportunity of venting all his Spleen and Malice upon DAVID (a much better Man than He) and This by Way of Punishment to DAVID for the Offence He had committed.

The Example of DAVID in thus looking up to God, and passing by the wretched Instrument SHIMEI, may be of excellent Use to Us, whenever we sustain any unjust Reproaches, or injurious Usage from Men. It would not only direct Us how to make a right Use of such Trials, but would be of Service also, to prevent a very ill Use which We are too apt to make of them. It might prevent our entertaining Rancour and Malice, and revengeful Thoughts against the Man who hath injured us, instead of repenting of our Sins, and humbling Ourselves before God. It is a very wrong Practice, to let our Thoughts rest in the mere Instruments, and not to look higher up to God, in whose Hands They are, and by whose Permission They act: And, however wicked and injurious the Enemy may be; God is kind and gracious in so directing the Event, and will abundantly recompense the Sufferer, here or hereafter. From hence then let Us learn what Use to make of Enemies, and how to behave under every Trial of that Kind. For, considering that it is every One's Case almost, more or less, and that Few can escape without Injuries of one Kind or other from wicked Men; it may be of Service to Us to remember this useful Lesson, and to lodge it in our Minds for the Regulating our Judgments, and the bettering our Lives.

Not that I would have Any One infer from hence, that a Man should be careless and indifferent as to Enemies; or that He should lay Himself open to Them, or not use all proper and prudent Precautions against injurious Usage; or not arm Himself against Them by all the honest Methods which Law, and Justice, and common Prudence, prescribe. If a Man neglects *These*, He may be thought rather to bring Troubles upon Himself, than to receive them at the Hands of God. But to proceed.

3. Another Inference deducible from the Doctrine of the Text, concerns our Opinions and Judgments of the ordinary Stream of Affairs, the common Course of the World. The Course of the World may be very bad; Wickedness may prevail and triumph, in some Places more, and in some less, and in one Age more than another, too much in all: But still, let it be a Comfort to every good Man, that *The Lord is King, be the People never so impatient; He sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet*. Whatever Irregularities

Irregularities or Disorders We observe in The Moral State of Things, still true it is, and it is a comfortable Truth, that God governs the World. He does not interpose by an irresistible Power to keep Men from Sinning; for *That* would be destroying Human Liberty, and governing Men in such a Way as cannot be at all proper in a State of Probation: But which is much more wonderful, amidst all that Variety of Wickedness which prevails in the Earth, He protects and preserves *good Men*, and suffers no Attempts to prevail against Them, while They keep their Integrity. Not that He always preserves Them from Violence and Wrong; for sometimes He thinks proper to chastise Them, and sometimes calls Them to lay down their Lives for his Name's Sake: But this last Case is extraordinary; while in the more ordinary Course of Affairs, good Men, with Respect even to the Comforts of this Life, find in Him a very sure and safe Retreat. This Consideration may be of Force to animate and encourage good Men in Troublesome Times. God sits at the Helm, and is no unconcerned Spectator over Human Affairs. He can as easily change the Face of Things, and bring Order out of Confusion, as He can calm a troubled Sea, or lay a Tempest. Let No Man be dismayed at any doubtful Appearances, or be filled with melancholy Apprehensions on any View of Things: A good Man has Nothing to do, but to preserve his own Innocence, and to do the utmost He can, to make the World better; The rest He may leave to God.

4. The Doctrine of Providence duly considered, is the best *Preservative* against Anxiety, and Multiplicity of Cares; which our blessed Lord Himself hath very particularly observed, and largely inculcated, as may be seen in the 6th and 10th Chapters of St. MATTHEW's Gospel. He there reminds Us how God's Providence extends to the *Fowls of the Air*, which neither sow nor reap; and yet our heavenly Father takes such Care, that They are plentifully fed, and provided for, by Him. He further observes, how the same kind Providence extends even to the *Lillies of the Field*, which, though they neither toil nor spin, are yet finely clothed, and beautifully arrayed, by the Hand of God. He intimates still farther, that every *Sparrow* is under the Care of Divine Providence; much more Man; and that the very *Hairs of our Heads are all numbered* with God. These are very lively Expressions of a particular Providence superintending every individual Man, Woman, or Child; and They are all so many cogent Arguments against too much Anxiety. *Therefore take no Thought* (that

is, no anxious Thought) saying, *What shall We eat? or What shall We drink? or Wherewithal shall We be clothed?* The Sum is: Be frugal, provident, industrious; but be not anxious, to waste the Body, and enfeeble the Mind, and to eat out the very Heart and Spirit of Devotion and Godliness. Trust to God's Blessing upon honest Industry, and moderate Care about the Things of this Life. Among the Thousands that die daily, how Few do We hear of who die for Want of Bread, or of Clothing? Is it not Demonstration that God, by his good Providence, takes as particular Care of Mankind in these Respects, as of the *Lillies of the Field*, or the *Fowls of the Air*? And yet if such a Thing should sometimes happen, as a Person's being starved, or famished for Want of Necessaries; it would be but a very rare Example, of One among many Millions; and probably owing, either to some very odd Accident, or to some gross Neglect, or grievous Fault of the Person so suffering. Be not then so extremely anxious for the Necessaries of Life, which God Himself has taken under his particular Charge, with this special Promise annexed: *Seek Ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto You.* Can any Thing be kinder than this Promise is, except it be, his most exact and constant Performance of it? As, upon these Accounts, you have but little Reason for being extremely anxious for Your Selves, so have You still less Reason for Anxiety about your Children after You: For That is more distant, and is what You have not so near a Concern in. What if You should die, and should leave Nothing behind You? Providence can never die. If God takes You away, your Children are then God's Care, and no longer Yours: And He that made Them, and gave Them You, has the greatest Interest in Them, and the tenderest Concern for Them. They are your *Children*; but They are his *Creatures* and *Children* too, and He the kindest of all Fathers. Why should you imagine that You are able to do well for Them, and that God cannot; or that You shall be kind and tender towards Them, and that God will not? Away with those vain Fears, and superstitious Cautions: Cast your Care upon God, Who careth both for You and Yours. Be not over solicitous about future Portions; Give your Children a good Sense of Religion, and bring Them up in the Fear of God: Be *That* their Portion, for *That* includes every Thing. Be *That* your Care, and God will do all the rest. What shall I say more to move you to trust in Divine Providence, and give

give over Anxiety, which is but vain and fruitless for the present, and, which is worse, grievous both to Body and Mind; and in Conclusion dangerous, perhaps fatal, with respect to your nearest, your everlasting Concernment?—But enough of this Particular.

5. The *general Conclusion* from the Whole is, that We endeavour to fix in our Minds an awful and constant Sense of Divine Providence. Entertain it not as an empty Notion only, but let it sink down into our Hearts, and become habitual and familiar to Us. Think upon it at all Times, and in all Places; let it abide and dwell with Us, when we lie down, and when We rise up, and under all Circumstances and Conditions of Life. Recount We and consider with Our Selves, what We owe to Providence, what Dangers We have escaped, what Blessings We have received; how We have been relieved in Straits, comforted in Distresses, and supported all along, under Divers Exigencies, and Casualties. It will be of great Use to Us in Life, to have always a present, lively, feeling Apprehension of God's Presence with Us, and his Care over Us. It will make Us thankful in Prosperity, and patient in Adversity. It will support our Spirits under Trouble or Danger, and make Us easy and well contented under Checks and Disappointments. It would be the best Preservative against Querulousness, Pride, Envy, and other foolish and hurtful Vices or Passions. When We consider all Things as coming from God, and conducted by an all-wise and steady Hand, We shall then take all Things in good Part, and rest content with any Thing that befalls Us. We shall live as it were under God's Eye, and look up to Him in all Emergencies. And, What is more than all, by thus constantly thinking of Him, We shall make it our daily Study and Endeavour to serve and please Him, that so We may enjoy his Favour and Blessings here, and his Presence Hereafter.



S E R M O N VII.

The Case of *passing Judgment concerning Calamities*, examined: What Kind of Judgment on such Occasions is *Innocent* and *Just*, ascertained; and the *culpable Extremes*, noted and censured.

The *First* Sermon on this Subject.

LUKE XIII. 2, 3.

And JESUS answering, said unto Them, Suppose Ye that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because They suffered such Things?

I tell You, Nay: But except Ye repent, Ye shall all likewise perish.

THIS Answer of our Blessed Lord was pursuant to some Discourse which passed about the *Galileans*, a seditious Sect of Men, Who had refused Subjection to the *Roman Government*, upon superstitious Principles which They had imbibed.

There were present at that Season, says St. LUKE in the first Verse of this Chapter, *Some that told Him*, (told our Lord) of the *Galileans*, whose Blood PILATE had mingled with their Sacrifices. Those *Galileans*, probably, were the Followers of JUDAS of Gaulonitis, Who seems to have been the Head of the discontented Party, dissuading their Country-Men from paying Submission to the *Romans*. The Plea or Pretence was, that
They

They were the *Lord's People*, and owed no Subjection to any Mortal upon Earth, or at least to no Foreign Power whatever: They would therefore pay no Tribute to CÆSAR, or his Officers, but to the Lord only, and his Ministers, or, in one Word, to the Temple. At the Time of the Passover, as is reasonably supposed, They came up, as the Custom was, to pay their Devotions, and to offer their Sacrifices at God's Altar. PILATE, the *Roman Governor*, took the Advantage, and resolved to chastise the Rebels, as He esteemed Them to be. He sent Soldiers after Them into the very Temple where They were sacrificing, and there He miserably slaughtered Many of Them, where the Beasts for Sacrifice had been newly slain, and so mingling the Blood of One with the Blood of the Other. This Massacre thus committed, in so sacred a Place, and upon Persons attending on the most sacred and solemn Offices, had the Appearance of Something extraordinary, different from common Providences; and so gave Occasion, or Umbrage, for a Suspicion, that the dreadful Usage They had met with, was a Judgment of God upon Them for some great Impieties. They could never have been Sinners of an *ordinary* Size, whose Punishment was so *extraordinary*. Such were the Thoughts and Reasonings of Many upon that Sad Occasion; as it is natural, in such Cases, to load the Unfortunate, and to trample upon Those who are already fallen. But our Blessed Lord, having more Humanity as well as a truer and more exact Judgment of Things, took Occasion to reprove their Uncharitableness, and to correct their gross Mistakes. He does not indeed deny either that the *Galileans* were Sinners, or that their *Sufferings* were brought upon Them for their *Sins*: But He condemns Those that censured Them yet more hardly, for their groundless and ill-natured Conclusion, that the suffering *Galileans* had been Sinners *above all the Galileans*; had been the *greatest* of Sinners, only because of their suffering *more* than Others had: And He further tacitly reproves their fond and partial Conceits in their own Favour; as if They were comparatively innocent and righteous, only because no such Calamity had as yet befallen Them.

Suppose Ye, says He, that these *Galileans* were Sinners *above all the Galileans*, because They suffered such Things? I tell You, Nay: But except ye repent, Ye shall all likewise perish. To this Instance of the *Galileans* He very appositely joins another of like Kind, upon which also He makes the like Reflection: Or Those *Eighteen* upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell; and slew Them, think Ye that They were Sinners *above all Men* that dwell

in Jerusalem? I tell You, Nay; and so on. Commentators have taken Notice, that these Words of our Lord had very probably a particular Reference to those temporal Calamities which were to come upon the *Jewish* Nation; and so were spoken by our Saviour in the Way of Prediction, foretelling the Fate of the *Jews* Who should continue impenitent; that *They should All likewise Perish*: And so indeed it came to pass within forty Years after. But my Design from these Words is, to consider the Text in its *general* View only; as containing a very instructive Lesson how to behave, and what Reflections or Use to make of it, whenever it pleases God to humble and afflict Others by any severe Visitations. It concerns Us first to entertain true and just Sentiments upon such Occasions: And next, to make all proper and suitable Improvement of Them. There was something true, and something false, in what the *Jews* suggested of the *Galileans*. They set out upon true Principles, but reasoned ill from them; pushing the Point too far, and running it to an Extreme. The Fault which They committed therein, is very natural and common; such as all Sorts of Men, in all Ages, are but too much inclined to. We are very apt to pass our Opinions or Censures upon our Neighbours, when any Calamities befall Them; and do not always consider so carefully as We ought, *when* and *where* to stop: But forgetting the just Bounds of Moderation, We sometimes carry our Reflections a great deal too far; till We both misinterpret the Divine Dispensations, and defeat their Use. Such being the Case, it may be proper to consider this Subject in its whole Compass, with all due Care and Accuracy, for the right forming our Notions of it, and for the regulating our Conduct in it. In order hereto, I shall discourse as follows.

- I. I shall observe what Kind of Reflections or Conclusions we may justly raise upon any Calamities or Afflictions which befall other Men.
- II. I shall take Notice of the *Extremes* which Many run into upon those Occasions, and which We ought carefully to avoid. And,
- III. I shall conclude with shewing what is, or ought to be, the *practical Result* of the Whole.

I.

I shall observe what Kind of Reflections or Conclusions We may justly raise upon any Calamities which befall other Men.

1. In the first place, We need not be scrupulous of thinking, or saying, that the Persons so visited, are visited for their Sins. Our Blessed Lord finds no Fault with the *Jews* for suggesting, or supposing, that the *Galileans* were *Sinners*, and were punished by God for their Sins. All mere Men are Sinners: And all Afflictions whatever have a Retrospect to Sins committed, and are, in Strictness of Speech, *Punishments* of Sin. It may be said, indeed, that good Men are afflicted for their Trial and Improvement, to exercise their Faith and Patience, and to raise their Virtues, as well as to heighten their Rewards. All This may be very true, and very consistent also with the Principle before mentioned: For if Afflictions are sent upon good Men, to cure Them of some Defects, and to advance their Virtues higher than before; This, in other Words, is *punishing* Them for their *Sins*; for those Defects are Sins in Them, though of a less dangerous Nature than the greater Provocations. Besides, it is very certain, that all Misery and Pain, all Trouble and Uneasiness, have Respect to Sin; For it is Sin only that hath brought forth Sorrow, as well as Death: And not Mortality alone, but all the Diseases and Discomforts incident to Mortality, are the Fruits and Consequences, the proper *Wages* of Sin. There is therefore no Mistake in imagining, or affirming, that Whenever Men suffer, or Whatever They suffer, They suffer for Sin. Now, as to the *Galileans*, in particular, our Blessed Saviour, tacitly at least, admitted, that They were *punished* as *Sinners*, and that their Calamity was a *Judgment* of God upon Them for their *Sins*. Whether They were good Men or bad, is not said; but *Sinners* They certainly were; and They could not suffer *more* at the Hands of God than their Sins had *deserved*. Temporal Afflictions, at the highest, come not up to the Demerit of Mens Sins: And therefore the best Men alive cannot suffer *more*, with Respect to God, than is *due* to their Transgressions. But probably, those *Galileans* were wicked Men, being seditious, turbulent, factious; only not *more* wicked than the rest of their Brethren: And our Lord, by his saying to the *Jews*, *but except Ye repent, Ye shall all likewise perish*, seems to insinuate, as if the *Galileans* were not *better* than the other *Jews*, though there was no sufficient Reason for thinking Them *worse*. However that were, there can be no Question made, but that the *Galileans* were Sinners, and punished in that extraordinary Manner for their Sins: And the like may be very safely asserted of any other Persons, when visited with Afflictions; because all Men are Sinners, and suffer justly,

whatsoever They suffer in this World, either by the Direction or Permission of Almighty God. For We may observe also,

2. That all Calamities whatever are to be understood as coming from the Hand of God. This is implied in the former; as it was supposed also in the Reasonings of the *Jews* upon the Case of the *Galileans*: And our Blessed Saviour does not contradict nor condemn the Notion, but rather allows and confirms it. The *Jews*, I say, supposed the *Galileans* to be grievous Sinners; and why? not surely because PILATE, a fallible and a cruel Man, had punished Them; but because God, They supposed, had done it by the Hands of PILATE. They looked upwards to a higher Hand than his, supposing PILATE to be the Minister, or Executioner only of the Divine Vengeance; and in This They judged right: For, if all Events whatsoever are in God's most Sovereign Disposal; and if not so much as a Sparrow falls, or a Hair of one's Head perishes, without his Leave; We may be certain, that the Lives of Men are more particularly under his providential Care; and that they are never sacrificed to any Man's Rage, or taken away by Violence, but when God sees fitting that the Thing should so take Effect. He can unloose the Hands of wicked Men to execute his righteous Vengeance, as often as He pleases; at the same Time withdrawing his protecting Arm from Those whom He has determined to punish. In this Sense, God is the Author and Disposer of all Calamities: They come not upon Us but when He pleases, or when He has determined to withdraw his Protection; directing, or permitting second Causes to hurt Us. This was true in the Case of the *Galileans*, and the other Case of the *Eighteen* that were crushed in the Ruins of the Tower of *Siloam*: And it is no less true and undeniable in all tragical Events whatever. Had the *Jews* carried their Reflections upon the Case no farther than This, that the *Galileans* had suffered for Sin, and that God Himself was concerned as the Supreme Author and Conductor of what had happened to Them; They had then kept within the Bounds of Sobriety and Truth: And the Consideration of the Thing, thus far, might have been both instructive, and useful. If the Sufferings of the *Galileans* came from God, it might teach Others to look up to Heaven, and to stand in Awe of the Divine Judgments: And if those Sufferings were brought upon Them for their Sins, then might Others also have Reason to tremble and be afraid; in as much as *All* are Sinners, and justly liable to the same Condemnation. Such Reflections as These, would be highly
reasonable

reasonable upon all such Occasions, and would be productive of many excellent Fruits. This is thinking justly and soberly upon God's Judgments, and bringing Them home to Our Selves in the Use and Application. And This is really what God intends by sending his Judgments abroad: It is to awaken and alarm All around, that so the Inhabitants of the World may learn Righteousness.

But This is a Conclusion which Human Depravity takes no Pleasure in, but rather studiously evades, or passes it over. And hence it is that the Generality of Men, not content with that easy, obvious, natural Account of God's Judgments, strain their Inventions to find out Something further; Something that shall make the Judgments of God look *particular*, and *personal* to the Sufferers only; thereby to render the Thing useless, in a Manner, and unaffecting, in Respect to Themselves. This is going into Extremes, as I observed in the Beginning: And I am now,

II.

To take Notice of those *Extremes* which Many so run into, but which We ought above all Things carefully to avoid. There are two noted Excesses in this Matter: One the Text expressly mentions, the Other is omitted, or only tacitly pointed to. That which is mentioned, is, the drawing rash and uncharitable Conclusions from *greater* Sufferings to *greater* Sins; as if They who have suffered *most*, must of Consequence have been the *worst* of Sinners. The other, which is not mentioned, but yet is tacitly condemned, is, the being positive and peremptory as to the *particular* Sin, or Kind of Sin, that draws down God's *Judgments* upon any *particular* Person or Persons. These two Excesses, or Extremes, as I call Them, often go together, being near akin to each Other: For, when We have once concluded that such a Person, so and so suffering, must have been guilty of more than ordinary Sins; Curiosity, or Vanity, or some other worse Principle, draws Us on to be further inquisitive; and to fix upon some *particular* Sins, or Kind of Sins, which we may lay to his Charge. But if the Case be obscure, and affords not so much as Light sufficient for any plausible Conjecture; then We are content to rest in Generals; and to conclude that the *Sufferer* must undoubtedly have been a very great *Sinner*, though We can neither say *how*, nor in *what*. This is more ungenerous and unfair than the Former; and

may always be pretended when there is no Place for the Other; wherefore This principally is what the Text takes Notice of, and our Lord condemns. But because *Both* of them are bad enough, and deserve our Censure, I shall consider *Both*, One after Another, as I go along: And because I shall not have Room to speak largely and severally of Each, at one and the same Time; I shall confine myself to *One* only at present, and reserve the *Other* for a Discourse by itself. That which I now intend to treat of, is the pointing out, or specifying the *particular* Sin, or Sins, for which we suppose God's *Judgments* to have fallen upon any *particular* Person or Persons. The *Motives* for doing This, are many and various, as Circumstances vary, though all centering in Self-Flattery, or partial Fondness to Our Selves.

Sometimes it is *Vanity* and *Ostentation*, while We affect to make a Shew of more than common Sagacity in discovering the hidden Springs of Events, and in interpreting the Secrets of Divine Providence.

Sometimes *Party-Prejudices* and *Passions* have the greatest Hand in it; while We are willing to measure God by Our Selves, and to fancy that He takes the same Side that We do. If our Opposers, or Adversaries, fall into Troubles or Disasters; how agreeable a Thought is it to imagine, that it was a *Judgment* upon *Them* for their Opposition to *Us*, and that God has thereby declared Himself a Friend to *our* Cause, and an Enemy to *theirs*!

But the most common and prevailing Motive of all, for censuring Others in this Manner on Account of their Afflictions, is to ward off the Apprehension of the like from Our Own Doors, and to speak Peace to Our Selves. Observe it carefully, and you will scarce find a Man charging a *Judgment* of God upon Others for any *particular* Sin, and at the same Time acknowledging *Himself* guilty in the like Kind. No, He will be particularly careful to pitch upon some Vice, which He Himself, in Imagination at least, stands clear of, and is the farthest from: And so He persuades Himself, that He is perfectly safe and secure from suffering in such Manner as Others have suffered, because He has not sinned in the like Instances as They have. Here lies the secret Root and Source of Mens Proneness to charge the Unfortunate with such or such particular Sins, as the Ground of their Troubles: It is to fence off Home-Applications, and to throw off all Apprehension of Danger from Themselves. Having seen what *Motives* Men go upon in their Constructions of God's *Judgments* upon Others; let us now proceed to observe how rash and

and unwarrantable a Thing it is, generally speaking, to pretend to specify the *particular* Sin, or Sins, which draw down God's Judgments on *particular* Persons. It is difficult in most Cases to determine, without a special Revelation (which now cannot be had) upon what *particular* Errand God's Judgments come; or for *what* Sins, exclusive of others, they have been sent. The Designs of Providence are vast and large; God's Thoughts are very deep, his Judgments unsearchable, his Ways past finding out.

1. Sometimes the primary Reasons, or moving Causes of the Divine Judgments lie remote and distant in Place, or in Time; several Years, perhaps, or even Generations, backwards. God may visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of Them that hate Him. He has at any Time full Power and Right to take away the Life which He gives, or any worldly Comforts which Himself bestows: And if He sometimes chuses to exercise this Right and Power on Account of Things done several Years or Ages upwards, there can be no Injustice in so doing; but it may more fully answer the Ends of Discipline, and God may shew forth his Wisdom in it. This I hint, by the Way, as to the Reason of the Thing: The Facts are evident from the Sacred History. When King ABAB had sinned, God depounced his Judgments against Him, but suspended the Execution, in Part, to another Time; assigning also the Reason for deferring it: *Because He humbled Himself before Me, I will not bring the Evil in his Days, but in his Son's Days will I bring the Evil upon his House*: Which was accordingly executed, in the Days of his Son JEHORAM, about fifteen Years after. The Case of the *Amalekites* is a very remarkable one: They were dreadfully cut off, Root and Branch, by the Hands of King SAUL, pursuant to the express Orders of God: But We must look *three hundred* Years backwards, to account for that heavy Judgment; and there We shall find what the *Amalekites* did to the Children of *Israel* in their Passage through the Wilderness. The Case of the *Amorites* and other Inhabitants of *Canaan*, is not unlike to the Former. Their Iniquities had been growing *several hundred* Years before the Divine Vengeance came upon Them; and we must take the Sum total of the Sins of the past and the then present Age, in accounting for God's Judgment upon Them. This We know by the Light of Scripture: But what Human Sagacity, unassisted by Inspiration, could ever have suspected it?

In the first Book of SAMUEL, we read of the miserable Slaughter of the Lord's Priests, Who fell a Sacrifice to the

Rage of King SAUL, for the Civilities They had shewed to DAVID in his Troubles. SAUL did very wickedly in destroying those innocent Men, who had deserved no Evil at his Hands: But God did righteously, in so executing the Sentence upon the House of ELI, which He had denounced against Them about a *hundred* Years before. Revelation informs Us as to this Particular, otherwise it had been impossible for any Mortal upon Earth to have seen through it, When DAVID had offended in the Affair of BATHSHEBA, it pleased God that the first Child He had by Her should be smitten with Death. The Child suffered for the Sin of the Father: This we learn from Scripture, and We could never have learned it any Way else.

I shall mention one Instance more, which lies a little out of the Compass of the Sacred Story. It is of the well-known Destruction of JERUSALEM by the ROMANS, in the Year of our Lord, *Seventy*. JOSEPHUS, the *Jewish* Historian, who relates the Facts at large, imputes that terrible Judgment of God to the monstrous Wickedness of his Countrymen of that Time: And indeed, according to human Appearances, and human Views, his Conjecture was not amiss: But as Many as know the New Testament, know, that the *Jewish* Nation had been sealed up to utter Destruction *seven and thirty* Years before; and it was for their condemning and crucifying the Lord of Glory. The flagrant Iniquities, which followed after, were but the natural Consequences of that *Judicial Blindness* under which God had left them, to be a miserable Spectacle, to all the World, of a most wretched and abandoned People. These Instances are sufficient to shew, how the Judgments of God may frequently have a Retrospect to Things transacted several Years upwards, in the Days of our Ancestors: And since We cannot certainly know *when* this is the Case, or *when* otherwise; it must be great Presumption and Rashness, generally speaking, to be *peremptory* as to the *particular* Sin, or Kind of Sin, for which a Judgment is sent.

2. It may further be considered, that sometimes the *best* Sort of Men are permitted to fall a Sacrifice to the Rage and Violence of the *worst*; and This either because *the World is not worthy* of Them, or because God gives Them up, that their malicious Persecutors may fill up the Measure of their Iniquities. In either View the Thing is rather a Judgment of God upon the Wicked who remain, than upon the Righteous so taken away. And if We cannot certainly determine *which* it is, as We seldom can, it will be

a blameable Presumption to be dogmatical or positive as to the particular Sin for which the Judgment is sent. But,

3. Supposing We were ever so certain, that Any Person is visited for his own Sins only, without any Respect to the Sins of his Ancestors, or of any Man else; yet great Mistakes may be committed in Conjectures made about the particular Sins. We have a very remarkable Instance of it in SHIMEI's Censure upon King David. *Come out, come out,* says He to the King, *Thou bloody Man, and Thou Man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon Thee all the Blood of the House of SAUL, in whose stead Thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the Kingdom into the Hand of ABSALOM thy Son: And behold, Thou art taken in thy Mischief, because Thou art a bloody Man.*†

SHIMEI was a violent Party-Man, of the House of SAUL, and attached to SAUL's Faction; disaffected all along to DAVID's Person and Government, and looking upon Him as an Usurper of the Throne, against Right Hereditary, against the Family of SAUL, who had been his Father-in-law. Now, to SHIMEI, observing that by a strange Turn of Providence DAVID Himself had been supplanted, and in a Manner dethroned by his own Son ABSALOM, the Case and Circumstances looked almost parallel to what had been done by DAVID with Respect to SAUL's Family: And it was very natural, for a Person of SHIMEI's Persuasion, to fancy that, by this remarkable Turn of Affairs, God had declared from Heaven in Favour of SAUL's Friends, and in Opposition to DAVID's. The Suggestion looked exceedingly plausible, and carried in it a fairer Colour of Probability than such Conjectures generally do. And yet We know for certain, that there was Nothing of Truth or Justice in it. DAVID had the clearest and best-grounded Title to the Kingdom that was possible for Man to have: And He had done Nothing amiss with Respect to the House of SAUL. That Judgment of God upon Him (for such it really was) respected quite another Thing; being sent, as We learn from Scripture, on Account of what DAVID had transgressed in the Matter of UURIAH. This Instance may be of Use to teach us Caution and Reserve, as to passing our Censures upon Persons under Affliction, and as to pointing out any particular Sin, or Sins, for which We may fancy the Judgment to have been brought upon Them. There is Nothing more precarious, or fallacious, than our Guesses of that Kind: And We can never be cer-

tain, without Revelation, that we have hit upon the Truth, It is a large Field for Superstition and Bigotry, for Prejudice and Passion, and great Uncharitableness, as well as for bold Presumption, and sometimes downright Profaneness. The *Pagans*, of old Time, played this Engine upon the *Primitive Christians*; as the *Romanists* of late Years have also done upon the *Protestants*: And all Sects and Parties, more or less, as Occasions have offered, have thus pelted One Another, and have been pelted in their Turns. The worst of the Thing is, that it does no Manner of Service to any Cause; but it does a great deal of Harm; in turning Mens Thoughts from reforming their own Lives, to condemning and censuring the Lives of Others; and, instead of answering the true Design and Purport of God's Judgments, does nothing else but defeat both their Meaning and Use. I deny not, but that some Kind of Calamities have so plain a Respect to some Kind of Vices, that one may even read the *Sin* in the *Punishment* consequent upon it. Thus, Extravagance is often punished by extreme Poverty, Intemperance by Diseases, and a dissolute Life by an untimely End: But these, and the like, are rather the natural Effects of Vice, than Judgment of God upon it.

There may be also some very peculiar Circumstances in a Punishment, as in that of ADONI-BEZEK, where the exact Resemblance of the Penalty to the Crime, may point out to Us that the Finger of God was in it. But such Cases are very rare; and when They do happen, We must first know for certain, that the Person has been really guilty of such or such Crimes, before We can justly draw the Parallel: And then the Observation is of little Use to Us; because plain undisputed Iniquities do not want any special Notices from Heaven, for a Warning against them; while we have the Law of Nature, and Divine Revelation, to do it more effectually.

The Result of What hath been now said, is, that We learn to be modest and cautious, as to the naming or specifying any particular Sins as the Causes of God's Judgments upon other Men. Specify your Own Sins if You please, or if You can, in such Cases: But as to Others, be content to lay the Charge upon *Sin in general*; and then, considering that We All have sinned, the Use and Application of God's Judgments upon Others will be brought home to Our Selves, and will be an Incitement to Us to repent and reform; lest We also suffer for our Sins, as Others in our Sight have. I have thus finished Part only of what I intended from the Text: The Remainder (God willing) shall be dispatched another Time.

SERMON

S E R M O N VIII.

The Case of *passing Judgment concerning Calamities*, examined: What Kind of Judgment on such Occasions is *Innocent* and *Just*, ascertained; and the *culpable Extremes*, noted and censured.

The *Second* Sermon on this Subject.

LUKE XIII. 2, 3.

And JESUS answering, said unto Them, Suppose Ye that these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans, because They suffered such Things?

I tell You, Nay: But except Ye repent, Ye shall all likewise perish.

IN a former Discourse upon these Words, after shewing the Occasion, and the Design of them, I proposed to treat of Three Particulars, as here follows:

I.
To observe what Kind of Reflections may be just and proper when any Calamities befall our Neighbours. And here I intimated that We may reasonably think, or say, that the Calamities come from God, and that they are sent on the Account of Sin; in as much as All Men are Sinners, and all
Visitations

Visitations have respect to Sin in One View or Other; either to *Original*, or *Actual* Sin; either to *past*, or *present*; either to our *Own* Sins, or the Sins of *Others*; or to *Both*.

II.

In the second Place, I proposed to take Notice of the *Extremes* or *Excesses* which Many are apt to run into in judging their suffering Neighbours, in loading the Unfortunate beyond Measure. One is, the charging Them with some *particular* Sin or Sins, and pretending to be positive and peremptory, that their *Afflictions* were a *Judgment* of God upon Them on that *special* Account. And here I endeavoured to shew the *Rashness*, *Folly*, and *Uncharitableness* of thus judging *Others*; since We have no Warrant for doing it, nor can we do it, except in very rare and particular Cases, with any Truth or Certainty.

The *other Excess* which I mentioned, and barely mentioned, is the drawing uncharitable Conclusions from *greater Sufferings* to *greater Sins*; as if They that are most afflicted; must of Consequence be the most guilty of any, or more guilty than Those who escape. The Folly and Rashness of so judging, is what I now intend to set forth at large, and then to proceed to a Third Particular; namely,

III.

To point out the *Practical Use* and Application of the Whole.

The Proposition then which I now design to go upon, is This, that, however apt Men may be to imagine, that the *greatest Sufferers* are the *greatest Sinners*; yet there is really no evident Reason for making any such Inference, no Truth or Justice in drawing such a Conclusion; but that, generally, all such Reasoning is precarious, false, groundless, and often very presumptuous, as it is ill-natured and uncharitable. Our Blessed Lord's Design in the Text was chiefly to rectify This common Mistake, and to correct that censorious Humour. Suppose ye, says our Lord to the *Jews*, that these *Galileans* were *Sinners* above all the *Galileans*, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, *Nay*: For ye who have escaped, and have not suffered, as They have done, may notwithstanding be as great, or greater Sinners than They were

were: And therefore it is but just to intimate, by Way of Caution and Warning to You, that *except Ye repent, Ye shall all likewise perish.* Now, in Order to shew that there is no just Reason or Consequence in arguing this Way from *Suffering to Sins*, from *greater Sufferings to greater Sins*, I shall proceed by several Steps and Degrees, as follows.

1. Let it be observed, that religious and righteous Men are often grievously afflicted: In which Case it is most evident, that, though They may and do deserve as great temporal Afflictions as can be laid upon Them; yet They do not deserve them *more*, nor *so much* as those *worse* Men that escape. God, for many wise Reasons, may sometimes punish good Men in this Life, and spare the Ungodly. The Sins of the *Former*, being of a *smaller* Size, may be purged away by temporal Calamities; while the *greater* Transgressions of the *Latter* are reserved for an After-Reckoning, a more solemn and dismal Account. Good Men may retain some Blemishes, which want to be washed away in the Baptism of Afflictions: They may be appointed to pass through a Purgatory in this Life (the only Purgatory that we *Protestants* know of) that so They may go away the more refined and purified to a better.

Or, God may sometimes serve the Interest of his Church, and set forth the Power of his Grace, and the Efficacy of the true Religion, by the Sufferings of good Men; which is the Case of Martyrs or Confessors, who have been persecuted for Righteousness Sake: Or, He may see good to afflict Them for a Trial and Proof of their Sincerity and Constancy; or to draw Them more and more off from the World, and so much the nearer to Himself, to improve their Virtues, and to raise their devout Affections; that so arriving to a nobler Height of Perfection in this World, They may at length be qualified for the more glorious Reward. It is very certain therefore, that we cannot reasonably infer from any Man's Afflictions, that He is *worse* than Others; since, for any Thing we know, He may be really *better*. It was very unjust and uncharitable in Job's three Friends, to charge Him with Hypocrisy, and heinous but unknown Crimes, on Account only of the calamitous State They had found Him in. Their groundless Surmises were extremely provoking and grating to the good Man in his Troubles, and were more afflicting to Him than his other Sufferings. He had Reason to say, as He did at that Time, to Them, *Miserable Comforters are Ye all*. For, besides the Ill-Nature and ill Manners of apply-

ing sharp Rebukes, where the softest Lenitives had been more proper, there was neither Truth nor Sobriety in the Reasonings They made use of. For, Who knows not that the Dispensations of Divine Providence follow a different Rule from what They supposed in the Case before Them; and that Nothing is more noted, or more certain in History, or Observation, than that Calamities sometimes fall upon very good Men; and in public, general Visitations, are often common both to *Good* and *Bad*? Besides the Instance of *Jon*, there is another still plainer, and every Way unexceptionable. You will apprehend, I mean That of our Blessed Saviour, Who had no Sin, but yet went through great Variety of the most painful and ignominious Sufferings. The *Jews*, who crucified Him, laid hold of That afterwards, as a Pretence for rejecting Him. They would not believe, that God should permit an innocent Person to die, in a Manner so infamous. They made his Sufferings an Argument for charging Him with Guilt; rashly concluding, that He lived not the Life of a righteous Man, since He died the Death of a Malefactor. They had forgot what many of the Wisest and Best of their Ancestors, their own Prophets, had suffered, of like Kind before; and what the same Prophets had foretold of the afflicted State of the promised *Messiah*. However, from this Instance We may plainly learn, that the greatest Suffering may be consistent with the clearest Innocence; and that therefore we cannot safely conclude merely from Sufferings, that any Man is a Sinner at all, much less that He is a *greater* Sinner than Others who escape. But,

2. Suppose We certainly knew that any Person Who is under Trouble, or Who has remarkably suffered, and died by the Hand of God, had been a wicked and ungodly Man; yet we cannot justly conclude, that He was at all *worse* than Many who had not so suffered. For in some Cases it may be an Argument rather in his Favour, to prove that He was not *so bad* as Others: And in no Case, as I conceive, will it prove Him to have been *worse* than Many who escape. Both these Articles may be demonstrated in such a Way, as may give reasonable Satisfaction.

First, I observe, that in some Cases the Afflictions which a bad Man suffers may be an Argument in his Favour, as affording a probable Presumption that He is not *so bad*, but rather *better*, than Those who escape. When God punishes Sinners in this Life, He either does it for the Amendment of the Sinner Himself, by such Afflictions as do not touch his Life; or He does it for a Terror and Warning to other Sinners,

ners, which may be compassed either Way, either in cutting Him off by an untimely End, or by lengthening out his Life in Pain and Misery. Now, I say, when God punishes a Sinner, in such a Way as affects not his Life, with a View to his Amendment (whether it be by extreme Poverty or Disgrace, or bodily Hurts or Diseases, or whatever else it be) in these Cases it may serve for an Argument in his Favour, to prove that He is somewhat *better* than Many Others that are spared. For, God, who sees into the Hearts of all Men, may know what Effect his Visitation will have upon Him; and may therefore mercifully mark Him out for Sufferings, as foreseeing of what Use They will be towards the bringing Him to a Sense of his Sins, and to a serious Repentance: Whereas Others, who are more hardened in their Vices and Follies, He may totally reject as past Cure; and so may let Them go on and prosper for a Time, 'till Death comes and brings Them a Summons to a higher and more dreadful Visitation. From hence then it is evident, that such Afflictions as are sent for the Amendment of the Sinner, are an Argument, so far, in his Favour, as to signify that He is not incurable; and are a Token of God's Kindness to Him, more than to other Sinners who are permitted to escape. Conformable to this Reasoning is That Passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth; and scourgeth every Son whom He receiveth. And, If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with You as with Sons.* And a little lower, *But if Ye be without Chastisement, whereof all are Partakers, then are Ye Bastards, and not Sons.* It is to the same Purpose that our Lord Himself speaks by the Evangelist St. JOHN in the Revelations: *As Many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* And there are other Texts of Scripture, which I forbear to mention, declaring the same Thing. Seeing therefore that Afflictions, when intended for the Amendment of a Sinner, are really Tokens of God's Love, and Indications of his Favour towards Them; it is very manifest, that such Afflictions are so far from proving Them to be *more* guilty than other Sinners who escape, that they rather prove the quite contrary; as intimating some Remains, at least, of Goodness in Them, on which Account They may be reasonably thought *better* Men than those that are spared. So much for the first Case.

I am next to shew that Afflictions, whatever They be, do in no Case whatever prove the Man so visited to be *worse* than all others Who are permitted to escape. Let us suppose (what perhaps is very rarely done) that a Sinner falling under

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the just Vengeance of God, and sealed up for Destruction, is immediately punished by sudden Death, or in some other more grievous Way, not in Order to his Amendment, but for a Terror and Example, for Others to take Warning by. Let us consider now, whether even in this Case the Judgment so sent, proves the Man to have been a *greater* Sinner than Others that are spared. I humbly conceive, it does not. For when many Sinners are equally guilty, it may suffice to punish a Few only, for a Warning to the Rest: Not because Others do not deserve the like Vengeance; but because God is willing to spare Some, in order to bring Them to Repentance, if possible, by such terrible Examples before their Eyes: Or if they take no Warning, nor repent in Time, the like Judgments may overtake Them also, even in this Life; or, They are reserved for a much severer Doom in a World to come. Thus does Almighty God, in his all-wise Dispensations, temper his Judgments and his Mercies together. He does not *cut off All*, that, if possible, He may *save Some*: He does not *spare All*, because *None* would then be brought to Repentance; but Wickedness would triumph uncontrolled, while no Check is given to the most daring Impieties.

But here, perhaps, You might ask, Why should Such or Such Sinners be singled out for Examples, rather than Others, and refused the Privilege of a longer Time to repent in, if They were not *greater* and more grievous Sinners than the rest? To which I answer:

First, Supposing Them to have been All equally guilty (which was indeed the Supposition I have proceeded upon) yet it might be necessary to cut off *Some*, and *Some* rather than *All*: And, in such a Case, God might chuse to single out such as He saw proper to animadvert upon, while his Mercy is free to pass by Others.

But further, it should be considered, that Those who are spared, except They repent, are in a worse Condition than Those who have already suffered: Their Judgment is respited only, and deferred for a Time, to fall the heavier at last: So that though They have some Favour shewn Them, in being spared so long, They have the more to account for; and, without Repentance, will at length pay dear for their Privilege.

But, I must add Thirdly, that, supposing the Offenders not to be equally guilty, yet God may, if He pleases, and very justly too, cut off the *Best* first, and spare the *Worst*, for two very plain Reasons: *One*, because the *Best* may sufficiently deserve

deserve it, and God may do as He pleases: *The Other*, because that, if it were his constant Method always to take Vengeance upon the *Worst* first, Many would be thereby encouraged to go on in their Sins, as long as They should imagine there were yet any Men left alive *more wicked* than Themselves. And now considering how apt Most are to judge favourably of Themselves, and very hardly of Others in comparison; such a Thought as That would be of very pernicious Influence to Many, would be a great Encouragement to Presumption, and a Bar to Amendment. Divine Wisdom therefore has fixed no such certain Rule as That of punishing the *greatest* Offenders before Others; but reserves to Himself the Liberty of taking Vengeance upon Offenders in general, whether *more* or *less* guilty. The Result then of all is, that We cannot reasonably conclude, in any Case whatever, that Those who have suffered *most* were *greater* Sinners than Many others who have been spared.

The sum then of What I have been advancing upon the present Argument, is This: I have shewn that Afflictions or Calamities are often sent upon innocent and righteous Men; and that therefore, in the general, there is no certain Consequence to be drawn from *greater Sufferings* to *greater Sins*. I have further shewn, that when We are certain that the Sufferers were, or are wicked Men; yet, as their Afflictions may be intended for their Amendment, those very Afflictions are an Argument of their *comparative* Innocency, and that They are not altogether so wicked or desperate as other Sinners who are spared. I have further put the Case, that their Punishments are ~~not~~ intended for their Amendment, but for their Excision, and utter Destruction; and have shewn notwithstanding, that, even on That Supposition, there will be no sufficient Ground for believing or judging, that They have been *greater* Sinners than Many Others Who have hitherto escaped. So that in all Views, and upon all Suppositions, it will be uncharitable and rash judging to condemn Others as being *Sinners* above all Men, on Account only of the *Sufferings* They have run thro' in this World. It is a false Rule of judging, which neither Scripture, nor Reason, nor Observation countenances; but Which ought to be corrected, or intirely laid aside for the *Iniquity* there is in it, and because of the pernicious Effects and Influences flowing from it. For the very End and Design which Men have in judging so severely of *Others*, is Nothing else but to speak Peace to *Themselves*. They load the Sufferers most unmercifully, only for Fear of suspecting it should be their own Turn to suffer next. They take all

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imaginable Pains to distinguish Themselves off, that They may have no Concern in What befalls Others, and may apprehend no Danger to Themselves from it. With these Views They magnify the Guilt of Those that suffer to the utmost, and comfort Themselves with flattering Thoughts of their own *comparative* Innocency. While They are thus minded, the Judgments of God upon *Others* They never apply to *Themselves*: They throw them off as Things foreign and of no Concernment; looking upon them only as extraordinary Occurrences to talk of, and to pass their Verdict, or their Censure upon; and not as *Warnings* sent from above, to call them off from their evil Ways, and to lead them to Repentance. Having seen what ill Effects and Abuses arise from This perverse Humour of censuring the Miserable, let us now proceed to the third and last Particular, which is

III.

To point out the true *Use* and *Application* of the *whole*; shewing what We are to think, and how it becomes us to behave, when any remarkable Calamities come upon *Others*.

1. In the first Place, it will be right and just to look up to God, as the Author and Conductor of all Occurrences; and to believe that no Misfortune, or Disaster happens, but by his Direction or Permission; and that when He either directs, or permits second Causes to afflict any Man, He does it for the Ends of Discipline, either to correct Sins past, or to prevent future. Every Affliction whatever, has, directly or indirectly, some Respect and Reference to Sin. Thus far the *Jews* Themselves soberly reasoned in the Case of the *Galileans*, without Rebuke from our Lord; yea, with his tacit Approbation. The *Galileans* suffered at the Hands of God, and suffered *justly*; for They were *Sinners*, though not the *greatest* of *Sinners*. And thus may we truly and safely judge of Any Person whatever, when visited by the afflicting Hand of God.

2. The next Step we are to advance to, is, to consider that the Divine Judgments or Visitations are not sent on Account only of the unhappy Sufferers, but are intended as useful Lessons, or salutary Warnings to the By-standers; to as Many as see them, or hear of them, or otherwise observe them: So that We are not to think We have done what is sufficient, upon those Occasions; till We have duly considered, how far our Neighbour's Calamity may be conceived to affect Us, and what Use and Improvement We may draw out

out of it. It was in this Article, chiefly, that the *Jews* were deficient with respect to the Case of the *Galileans*. They considered the Thing as a Piece of News, affording Them Matter for Discourse, and barren Speculation: But They took no Care to apply, or bring it home to Themselves, by any Self-Reflections. The *Galileans* (They would say) have felt the Divine Vengeance; wicked Wretches, most certainly, or else They had fared better. They were severely handled; but God is just, and, without all question, They had their Deserts. What a Comfort is it to Us, that We have been *better* Men than They were; and so have come to no Misfortune, as They have done! Such were the Reasonings, or Reflections of the *Jews* on that Occasion; never considering, that the Judgment upon the *Galileans* was a Warning to Them; Who, though They had not yet been *Fellow-Sufferers* with Them, were however no better than *Fellow-Criminals*. It became Them not therefore to insult over the Miserable, and to charge Them beyond Measure, when They ought rather to have spared Them, and to have turned the Satyr and Invective upon *Themselves*. When God's Judgments are sent abroad, the Inhabitants of the Earth should learn Righteousness, and be led to Repentance. They should look upon them as Matters of public and common Concern, in which All, more or less, are interested, and have their Use to make of them. We should never think that We have rightly and duly commented upon the Divine Judgments that are before our Eyes, till We have applied them in a proper Manner to *Our Selves*, and have made a suitable Use and Improvement of them.

3. Thirdly, and lastly, to bring these general Principles down to particular Cases, We may next consider how to improve and turn to our Use such special Instances as We may happen to meet with. Suppose some Calamities to fall upon righteous and good Men, or whom we have Reason to believe are such: The Use We are to make of it, is, to stand in Awe, and to humble Our Selves before God. For, *if Judgment begin at the House of God, and if the Righteous scarcely be saved* (that is, preserved) *where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?*

If Afflictions fall upon unrighteous and sinful Men, yet judge not the more hardly of Them upon that Account, but rather the contrary. Let it be an Argument to Us, that God has not yet given Them up, as abandoned and desperate, while He keeps Them under Discipline, and, as it were, holds the

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Rod over Them. At the same Time be assured, that his chastising a Few only, is intended as an Example and Warning to All, in as much as All are Sinners, more or less: And be thankful for the Opportunity now given You, of learning Instructions from the Sufferings of *other* Men, rather than from *Your Own*; growing wiser and better by their Misfortunes, and, as it were, at their Expence; and reaping the same Benefit which They may do from it, but without Their Pain and Uneasiness. If there be any Way of averting God's Judgments from our own Doors, and rendering them in a Manner unnecessary to Us, it is to be done by regarding and reverencing them before they come at Us, and by making the same Use of them, while resting upon *Others* only, as we should incline to do, when brought upon *Our Selves*. Let the Sight and Sense of God's afflicting Hand upon our Fellow-criminals, teach us Humility and godly Fear, and move us to Repentance and good Works. Instead of censuring and loading Them (which becomes Us not, and can do Us no Good, but may do a great deal of Harm) let us rather chuse to censure and correct our own Lives, to humble Our Selves before God, to look into our many Sins and Failings, and to amend the same with all due Care and Exactness, and as soon as possible. This is making a right Use and Improvement of God's Visitation upon Others, to his Glory, and to our own Happiness now and ever.

S E R M O N IX.

The Nature and Kinds of *Sins of Infirmary.*

The *First* Sermon on this Subject.

MATTHEW XXVI. 41.

The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.

THESE are the Words of our Blessed Lord to his drowsy Disciples. It was the Night before his Passion, a Night which He Himself spent in Prayer and Watching, and He had intreated his Disciples to tarry and watch with Him. But their Hearts were dull, and their Eye-lids heavy; and, notwithstanding all their best Endeavours to the contrary, Sleep stole upon Them, and overcame Them. Hereupon, their indulgent Master, coming to Them, thus gently rebuked Them: *What? could Ye not watch with Me one Hour? Watch and pray, that Ye enter not into Temptation.* Then follows, *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* Which Words I understand, with the Generality of Interpreters, as spoken in the Way of kind *Excuse* or Mitigation of their Fault, in not watching at a Time when it was their Duty to have done it, and when even common Prudence required it. One can scarce acquit Them of some Degree of Negligence and Want of Respect in that Affair: But our Blessed Lord was pleased to put the mildest and most candid Construction possible upon it. The Night was far spent; Sleep stole upon Them unawares; and They were naturally slow and heavy, not apprehending how much depended upon that critical Juncture. They intended no Affront or Disrespect to their Lord: They had a true and real, only not so lively and vigorous a Concern for Him, as They ought to have had. Their *Spirit* truly was *willing*, and They meant well;

well; but yet, for Want of quicker Sentiments, They failed in the Performance. It was natural Infirmity which prevailed over their Resolutions, which over-powered their very hearty and honest, but languid Endeavours. *The Spirit truly was willing, but the Flesh was weak.*

The Words of the Text have been thought to express, in very proper and affecting Terms, the Nature or Essence of that Kind of Sins which we call *Sins of Infirmity*, or Sins of human Frailty: And it is under this general View that I now design to consider them, abstracting from the particular Occasion of them. In discoursing further, my Design is,

- I. To consider *What Sins* are properly *Sins of Infirmity*, and *What not*.
- II. To inquire how our State and Condition to God-wards is affected by them.
- III. To shew what Kind of Management on Our Part, may be prudent and proper in regard to them,

I.

I am to consider *what Sins* are properly *Sins of Infirmity*. Their *general Nature* is briefly described thus; that they are rather *weak* than *wilful*, having much more of *Frailty* than of *Wilfulness* in them. Something of *Wilfulness* they must have, otherwise they could not be imputed as *Sins*: But as the Degree of *Wilfulness* is *small* in Comparison, and the *Frailty* so much the *greater*; they have therefore their Denomination from their *most prevailing* Ingredient, and so are called *Sins of Infirmity*. They are such, as by a very accurate Caution and Circumspection might be avoided or prevented, and therefore they are *Sins*: But yet, because such exact Caution or Circumspection is but rarely seen, and is not generally to be expected, therefore it is that the Sins of that Kind have the Favour of being numbered among *Human Frailties*. They are a Kind of Slips, Failings, or Deviations, issuing from an honest and good Heart, and carrying no *Malice prepense*, no *premeditated* Guile, no ill Meaning in them; harmless almost as to the *Matter* of them, and without any bad Design. They are owing either to *Inadvertency*, *Forgetfulness*, *Surprise*, Strength of *Passion*, or to the *Suddenness* and *Violence* of an unlooked for *Temptation*. But this general Description of them will not be so instructive or satisfactory to common Hearers, as a *particular Detail* may be, while I descend to *special Cases* and *Instances*, which is what I now intend.

Sins of Infirmity then may be branched out into *three several Sorts*, respecting either our *Thoughts*, our *Words*, or our *Actions*.

1. I begin with the *first* of them, such as have respect to the inward *Thought*. And here we are liable to offend *two Ways*, either in *not thinking* as We ought to think, or in *thinking* as We ought not.

Human Frailty is too often, and too sadly felt, in what concerns the *Government of the Thoughts*. Who is there that does not often find *Distraction*, and *Wandrings*, and *Deadness* at his *Prayers*, *private* or *public*; but *public* more especially, as We there meet with more *Objects* to divert the *Eyes*, and to turn off the *Attention*. There is nothing which a Man has less under *Command* than his own *Thoughts*, in such Cases. He may be very devout this *Minute*, and design to be so all the *Way* through, and yet be quite thrown off the next *Moment* without observing it presently; and when He does observe it, He knows not how it came to Him, but that it is like his waking from a *Dream*. This Kind of *Non-attention*, or *Absence of Thought* in religious *Exercises*, so far as it is a *Sin* (for it is not so always) is, generally speaking, a *Sin of Infirmity*, and no more. And it is then only to be reckoned among *wilful Sins*, when a Man makes a *Habit* of it, and slothfully submits to it, without striving against it; or when it carries some *Contempt* of the *Service* with it, arising from some *vicious Principle* of the *Mind*.

Besides the *Sin of Infirmity* now mentioned, I may name some Others reducible to the same Head: Such as the *not thinking often enough*, or *highly enough*, of God and his *Good Providence*; not having Him constantly in our *Thoughts*, nor setting Him before our *Eyes*; not attending to his *Calls*, not regarding his *Judgments*, nor being duly thankful for his *Mercies*, and the like. As to *Omissions* of this Kind, more or less, We offend All: And such Offences, We may hope, will rise no higher in Account than *pitiable Infirmities*.

To these we may add, the *not thinking how to lay hold of*, and to *improve any Opportunities* we meet with of *doing Good* in the *World*; and This through *Dulness*, through *Inadvertency*, or *Forgetfulness*: For, if We wilfully and designedly let slip the *Golden Opportunity* offered us, and despise the *Invitation*, the *Sin* is then *wilful*, and the *Offence* *presumptuous*.

Among *Sins of Infirmity* belonging to this Head, may be reckoned some Kinds of *Unbelief*, as both *Belief* and *Unbelief* respect the inward *Thoughts* of the *Heart*, *Want of Faith* or

Trust in God's Words, or his Promises, in some timorous Minds, may justly pass for a *Sin of Infirmary*. Such was the Sin of ZACHARIAS, in doubting of the Truth of the Angel's Message to Him; and for such *Unbelief* of his, He was struck dumb, and continued so, not able to speak for a Season. Our Blessed Lord often reprov'd his Disciples for the like *Want of Faith*, or *Trust*, saying unto Them, *O Ye of little Faith*, and the like. Several of God's true Servants under the Old Testament betrayed sometimes the like *Diffidence*, and *Doubtfulness*. MOSES, in his excessive Shyness and Modesty, durst not undertake to speak before PHARAOH though He had God's Commission for doing it; And JONAS the Prophet discovered the like Tergiversation and Backwardness, as to the Errand He was sent upon to the *Ninevites*. These are Instances of *Human Frailty*, in Men otherwise very pious and religious. THOMAS's *Unbelief* was somewhat worse, and was carried farther. It was a strange Instance of *Obstinacy* to resolve to believe Nothing but what He should see, and feel. This Fault of his can but *hardly* come under the Head of *Infirmary*; except it were because there was Something very particular in the Temper of the Man, which might render it the more excusable in Him. But MARY's want of Faith in respect to our Lord's raising up her Brother LAZARUS, before She saw it done, is a proper Instance of a *Sin of Infirmary*, and falls under this Head.

Many timorous Persons, though otherwise very religious and devout, are apt to offend in this Kind; not relying upon God's good Providence, nor reposing their Trust in Him with such Confidence as They ought. They despond, and sink down in the Day of Adversity more than becomes Them to do; as if They had forgot, that the very *Hairs of their Heads are all numbered*; or as if they had never read, that not so much as a *Sparrow falleth to the Ground*, but by the Order, or with the Permission of an all-knowing God.

Hitherto, I have been considering such Sins of Infirmary as respect the inward *Thoughts*, in such Cases wherein We do not think as We ought to think.

There is another Branch of the same Head, which is, the *thinking as We ought not*. The former is a Sin of *Omission* only, *This of Commission*, Both resting in the *Mind*. When We are *thinking of this World only*, suppose in *Prayer-time*, or *Sermon-time*, instead of thinking of a *better*, as Most of Us are too apt to do: This, We hope, may pass for a *Sin of Infirmary*, if not *chosen* by Us, nor *designedly indulged*.

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Sometimes *profane, blasphemous Thoughts* will rise up in Mens Minds: But if they be *checked* as soon as observed, and are not *consented* to, they are, at most, no more than *Sins of Infirmary*, owing generally to *boaily Indispositions*. The same, I say, even of *unchaste or malicious Thoughts*, if they are only *short and transient*, which *abide not*, which do not gain our *Consent*, but are *condemned* by Us as soon as perceived; they are then either *Sins of Infirmary* only, or not *Sins at all*. For what the *Will, or Choice*, has no Hand in, is not imputable to Us as a *Fault*; it may be our *Misfortune*. The *first Risings*, the first *Dartings* of a *Thought* into the Mind, are very little, if at all, in our *Power*: We are mostly *passive* in them, and are no farther *accountable* for them, than as We afterwards make them ours by *indulging* them, and *taking Pleasure* in them: Then, indeed, such evil *Thoughts* become *Crimes*, and grow up from *Infirmities* into *wilful Sins*.

The *first Emotions* of the *Passions* are as little in our *Power* as the Other. A sudden *Fear*, or *Astonishment*, the first *Kindlings* of *Wrath* and *Anger*, or the like: These a Man cannot help: They come upon Him *unawares*, and take Him by *Surprize*. So far He is *innocent*; and if they dwell with Him a little *Time*, they may amount to *Sins of Infirmary*: But if they are farther *indulged*, as if *Anger*, suppose, is suffered to grow into *Rage*, or to settle into *Malice*, it then becomes *wilful, deadly Sin*.

Too much Warmth and Eagerness, in some *Instances*, is a *Sin of Infirmary*. Such, I suppose, was *PETER's Eagerness*, when He drew his *Sword*, without staying for his Lord's *Commission*, and smote off a *Servant's Ear*. Perhaps also *St. PAUL* was too warm and eager, when He so sharply rebuked the *High-Priest*, correcting Himself however, presently after, and making an *Apology* for What He had said.

Excessive Fondness, in some *Cases*, is another *Instance* of *Sins of Infirmary*. Fond Parents especially have great Reason to hope that their partial, and often foolish *Fondness*, shall pass for no worse; otherwise They would many *Times* have a great deal to answer for. *DAVID's Fondness* for his Son *ABSALOM* was very highly extravagant, and such as is not to be justified upon any *Principle* of *Religion*, or *Reason*: Nevertheless It must admit of a fair *Excuse* upon the Score of *Infirmary*; It was no *wilful Sin*. But *ELI's Indulgence* and *Remissness* towards his Sons, whom He as a *Magistrate* ought to have corrected, being more *deliberate*, and of much worse *Tendency*, That was charged upon Him as a *beinous Crime*, and both He and his *Posterity* remarkably suffered for it.

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To this Head I may refer *Credulity*, or over-hasty Belief, as being often a *Sin of Infirmary*, and pertaining only to the Mind. Many an honest and good Man may be *too credulous* in believing idle Stories, and false Reports; when He ought to be upon his Guard. Thus the *Man of God* suffered Himself to be deceived by the lying Prophet of BETH-EL, and paid dear for his Credulity; though, as I conceive, his Sin was no more than a *Sin of Infirmary*: He meant well, and had an honest Mind.

To the same Head may be referred *over great Carefulness*, or Anxiety, in respect of *worldly Things*. It is to be hoped, that much of this Kind may be allowed to pass among our *pitiable Failings*, and bear no harder a Name than that of *Sins of Infirmary*. MARTHA, a very good Woman in the main, was yet careful and cumbered about many Things, more than She should have been; and She received a gentle Rebuke for it from our Blessed Lord. It was a *Sin* to be so over-careful and anxious for Trifles, to the Neglect of better Things; But She did not consider it; She intended well, and thought even her Sister to blame for not doing as She did, though She was much better employed.

Hitherto I have been considering *Sins of Infirmary* as reaching no farther than the *Mind*, resting in *Thought only*. I proceed now to a *Second Article*, or Head of Discourse, respecting our *Speech*.

2. Many are our *Sins of Infirmary* reducible to this Head. *If Any Man offend not in Word, the same is a perfect Man*, a very Saint upon Earth, as St. JAMES justly observest. But where shall We find such a Person? or has there ever been such an One, our Blessed Lord only excepted, who had no Sin, nor was *Guile found in his Mouth*? Many are the Offences of the *Tongue*: Our greatest Comfort is, that several of them may pass for *Frailties* only; and happy will it be for Us, if We go no farther. MOSES, One of the best Men that ever lived, stands charged in Scripture, as one speaking *unadvisedly with his Lips*†, in an Affair of high Consequence. It was a *sudden Passion* that betrayed Him into it, and He had no *Ill-Meaning*: It was a *Sin of Infirmary*. I am persuaded that even PETER's Denial of his Lord, was rather *weak*, than *wilful*: He was surprized into it, had forgot Himself, and had not yet Time to recollect. He had a very *honest Heart*, and had Courage enough even to fight, or die for his Lord, at another Time: And as soon as ever He perceived how meanly He had behaved in denying his Lord, He was sadly struck with it, and

† James iii. 2. † Psal. lvi. 33.

and wept bitterly for it. All these Circumstances plead in his Favour, and make his Sin appear rather as a *Sin of Infirmary*, than a *presumptuous Sin*.

I should be willing to hope that *hasty, headless Swearing, or taking God's Name in vain*, in those Who had unhappily got a Habit of it from their Childhood, may be but a *Sin of Infirmary*, for some Time: But to such as perceive it, and continue it, and use not all proper Means and Care to get the better of it, and to break the evil Habit, to Them it is wilful and deadly Sin.

Telling of Lyes I do not reckon among the *Sins of Infirmary*: It is, generally, at least, a *voluntary* chosen Thing: But varying a little from *strict Truth*, or adding to it, as is sometimes done, *undesignedly, hastily, forgetfully*, in the making a Report, if it be in Things of slight Consequence; That may be numbered among *human Frailties*.

Angry and *passionate Speeches* may mostly fall under the Head of *Infirmities*: But bitter *Invectives*, and irritating, *injurious Reflections*, made in cold Blood, made *deliberately*, are without Excuse.

There are sometimes sharp Contentions between very good Men, and very good Friends, where both Sides mean well, but differ in Opinion, or Judgment. Such was the sharp Contention between PAUL and BARNABAS, recorded *Acts xv.* in which BARNABAS appears to have been *blameable*, in favouring his Kinsman MARK more than became Him to do, where the public Interest of the Church lay at Stake: But This was his *Infirmary*; and even the Best of Men will be subject to human Frailties.

It would be endless to enumerate all the Offences of the Tongue, which Men are liable to. It is a difficult Matter to talk much, and well: Great Talkers offend often; and They who say the least, are generally the most innocent.

Yet there may be a Fault sometimes in being too reserved, shy, and silent: As when a Man neglects to exhort or reprove his Neighbour, as Occasions offer, or when He can patiently sit by, and hear the Name of God dishonoured, or an innocent absent Man abused, without opening his Mouth in Defence of either. Such *Reservedness*, in some Cases, may rise no higher than a *Sin of Infirmary*: But for the most part We may more justly call it a *wilful Neglect*; betraying Meanness of Spirit, at least, or something worse.

But enough hath been said of *Sins of Infirmary*, so far as relates to Speech.

3. I come now in the *third Place* to the most material Article of all, which concerns our *outward Actions*: And here also we may offend two Ways; either as *neglecting to do what We ought*, or as *doing what We ought not*.

Sins of Infirmary are mostly seen in our manifold *Omissions* and *Neglects*, either forgetting what Duties are incumbent upon Us, or performing them but in Part. Who can say how oft He offendeth in this Kind? Who can say that He hath acquitted Himself perfectly in every Instance of Duty towards God, and towards his Neighbour? to his King or to his Country, to his Family or Relations, to his Friends and to his Enemies, to High and Low, to Rich and Poor, to every Man He has any Relation to, or Concern with? Hard would be our Circumstances, were We to give a strict Account of all our *Omissions*; or if much the greater Part of them were not kindly overlooked by an all-merciful God, as *pitiable Frailties*. Yet let not Any Man set light by *Omissions*. *Wilful Omissions* of *known Duties*, are *wilful* and *Presumptuous Sins*: And there are some Kinds of *Omissions* which will be always charged as *wilful*, and will be enough to exclude Us from the Kingdom of Heaven: Particularly, if We *omit* or *neglect to worship God*, or *do Good to Man*, as our Opportunities and Abilities permit. If We neglect to *feed the Hungry*, or to *clothe the Naked*, or to *visit the Sick*, or to *comfort the Afflicted*; our Blessed Lord Himself hath told Us, that We shall not be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven: And further, if We neglect, or *omit*, to *forgive our Enemies*, We can have no Forgiveness at the Hands of God. Briefly then, though many of our *Omissions*, or *Neglects*, amount only to *Sins of Infirmary*; yet there are *Sins of Omission* which are both *wilful* and *dangerous*, as any other Sins are, and which will admit of no *Excuse* upon any Pretence of *human Frailty*.

I come next to speak of *Sins of Commission*, the *doing what We ought not* to do. Sins of this Kind are *mostly wilful*: But some there are which may be justly looked upon as *Sins of Infirmary*. Drunkenness in righteous NOAH, *once only*, might be a *Sin of Infirmary*. He was not aware of the Effects of Wine: He had not till then had Experience of it: He was overtaken unawares, and *surprized* into it. I know not whether the like favourable Excuse may not be admitted for Others who may *once* unhappily fall into the like Excess *unawares*. But, generally speaking, as the World now stands, a Man can scarce be *surprized* into such Excess, or overtaken without *his Fault*. Many perhaps will say, that
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They did not, or do not, design to drink so far as to be drunken: That may be true; but still they are *wilful Sinners*, and Drunkards, for *not designing* and *resolving* to be *constantly sober*, and for not using the *proper Means* to avoid Temptation.

Some have been weak enough to plead *human Frailty* even for crying and *scandalous Sins*, such as *Fornication*, or *Adultery*, or other sinful Lusts: But all such Pretences are vain. Sins of that Kind never are, never can be, committed without great *Degrees of Wilfulness*. It is not *Surprize*, nor *Inadvertency*, which brings a Man into the Commission of such Offences; but they are *chosen* and *premeditated Sins*, and a Man is drawn into them through Lust, and Wantonness, by several Steps and Degrees, with *full Consent* of a *depraved Will*. Slight Offences a Man may be drawn into by *Surprize* or *Incogitancy*; but hardly into the great ones. The Mind starts, and Conscience generally gives the Alarm before-hand, that a Man must take some Pains with Himself, generally, before He can reconcile Himself to any great and scandalous Vices. Such Offences, therefore, are not *Sins of Infirmary*, but they are *deliberate, presumptuous, damning Sins*. If it be pleaded, that the Object is inviting, and the Temptation strong, violent, irresistible; That is just such a Plea as any common Thief or Robber might make for invading Property, or making an Assault. No doubt but that such Persons are violently tempted to commit such Outrages, or They would not do them: The Temptation, probably, in that Case, is stronger than in the other; for a Thief or a Robber does it at the utmost Peril, and ventures his Life in it; Whereas it is more than probable, that if *Fornication* or *Adultery* were as severely prohibited, and punishable by the Laws of the Land, it would be found that the Men of Pleasure could command Themselves, and resist the Temptation: But They are encouraged, after They have laid aside the Fear of God, by the Hopes of Impunity from Man; and then being got above Restraint, They commit all Uncleanness with Greediness.

There are some other Kinds of Sins for which *human Infirmary* is sometimes pleaded, and with very little Reason. *Acts of Hostility*, Assaults, Beating, Striking, Wounding, and the like. It is said by Way of Excuse, that They were *provoked* to it, and that Flesh and Blood could not forbear in such Cases. But these are Pretences only, of vain Men, Who have not yet learned any Thing of Christian Meekness, but Who have Hearts too proud and stubborn to submit to the Rules of the Gospel. *Sins of Infirmary*, properly so called,
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are Sins of quite another Kind than those I have now mentioned. Good Men run sometimes into excessive Warmth and Zeal in the Discharge of a Duty, or Execution of an Office : They may be guilty of indiscreet Rigours, and push Things too far ; may be so afraid of not doing enough, that they will even over-do, and be too officious, or too severe, exceeding the Bounds of Christian Prudence, and doing Hurt, when they intended Good.

These, and other the like *Indiscretions* of good Men, are properly *Sins of Infirmary*, owing to Inadvertency, or Surprise, or to some *natural Weakness* adhering to their particular Temper, Complexion, and Constitution.

From what hath been said, every intelligent Hearer may competently judge which are *Sins of Infirmary*, and which *not* : And I thought it of Moment, to be as distinct and particular as possible on this Head, to prevent *Mistakes* ; by which Means this Part has been drawn out into a greater Length than I at first supposed ; and I have no Room left for the *two other Articles* I proposed to treat of. I shall therefore break off for the present, and, with your good Leave, defer the Remainder to another Opportunity.



S E R M O N X.

The Nature and Kinds of *Sins of Infirmary*.

The *Second* Sermon on this Subject.

MATTHEW XXVI. 41.

The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.

I N a former Discourse upon this Text, I undertook to open and explain the Nature of *Sins of Infirmary*; and to consider the most material Points, which might either fall within the Subject, or relate to it: And, that I might do this in some Order and Method, I propos'd to throw the Substance of what I intended, into three general Heads, which were these:

- I. To consider, what Kind of Sins are properly *Sins of Infirmary*.
- II. To inquire, how our *Spiritual State* and Condition are affected thereby.
- III. To shew, What Kind of Management on our own Part, may be prudent, or proper, in regard to them.

Upon the *first* of these Heads, I found My Self obliged to be so distinct, large, and particular, that I had no Room left for prosecuting the *other two*. I considered of what Importance it might be to Us, to distinguish carefully and accurately between Sins of *Infirmary* and *Presumptuous Sins*: And therefore made it my Business to shew, by what Marks and Tokens We may readily distinguish One from the Other: And I endeavour'd, further, to illustrate the several Cases, as they came to be mentioned, by chosen and pertinent Examples taken out of the Old or New Testament.

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The Sum of what I advanced was, that the Essence, or distinguishing Character of a Sin of *Infirmity* was This: That it is a Violation of some Law of God, and in some Degree *wilful*, but in a much greater Degree *weak* and pitiable. It must be in some Measure *voluntary*, to make it Sin; And it must be in a much greater Measure *involuntary*, to make it a *Frailty*. Even the Best of Men have their Defects, their Failings, and Infirmities, and do not always stand upright. They have either some Flaw in their natural Temper, or some Weakness in their Judgment, which betrays them often into slight Mistakes, and almost innocent Slips in Life, while They retain a very honest and good Heart. They lean perhaps a little too much toward the World, and their Affections are not altogether so raised and heavenly as they might be, or should be. They sometimes find Desertion of Spirit, Coldness in Devotion, and Flatness in holy Exercises: They are too anxious, fretful, and desponding, in the Day of Adversity; or too gay, and too much alert in the Day of their Prosperity. Besides this, They are liable to Sleepiness, Forgetfulness, Surprise, and Inadvertency; either through the Hurry and Confusion of outward Accidents, or through some inward Disorder, or Indisposition of the Blood and Spirits: So that sometimes They come short of their known Duty, and sometimes They exceed and go beyond it; not observing the due Medium, the Golden Mean between the two Extremes. The Slips or Deviations of this Kind are what Divines call *Sins of Infirmity*: And such I described at large under my *First Head*, and in my former Discourse. I proceed now *Secondly*, as I proposed,

II.

To inquire how far our *Spiritual State* or Condition are affected by the Sins of this Kind. They do not exclude a Man from the *Kingdom of Heaven*: They do not put Him out of a *State of Grace*, or out of *Favour* with Almighty God. This may be proved several Ways, both from *Scripture Texts*, and from the *Reason of the Thing* itself.

1. There are two or three special Texts of Scripture, which number up and recite such particular Sins as will most certainly, if not repented of, exclude the Offenders from the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

One is in the vith Chapter of the *First Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, and runs thus: *Know Ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither*
Fornicators,

Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of Themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.† To the same Purpose speaks the same Apostle, in the *Epistle to the Galatians*: *Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Strife, Sedition, Heresy, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like: Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in Time past, that They Who do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*‡ Now, if we carefully look into this black Catalogue of Sins which exclude a Man from Heaven, We shall find them all to be of the wilful, presumptuous Kind, and not Sins of Infirmity. They are all Sins of a crying, provoking Nature, whereof the Injustice and Wickedness, with Respect to God and Man, is palpable: And they are such as Men do not commit merely through Inadvertency, Incogitancy, or Surprize, but knowingly, wilfully, presumptuously, against the Light of Reason and Revelation, and against the clearest Dictates of their own Consciences.

Of the same Kind also are the Sins of *Omission* which our Blessed Saviour recites, or points to, where He is describing the Sentence which shall pass upon the Ungodly at the last Day. *Then shall He say also unto Them on the left Hand, Depart from Me, Ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For, I was an hungred, and Ye gave Me no Meat; I was thirsty, and Ye gave Me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and Ye took Me not in; Naked, and Ye clothed Me not; Sick and in Prison, and Ye visited Me not.*|| All these Instances are notorious Breaches of the great Law of Mercy and Charity, and such as a Man cannot be guilty of without knowing that He is so, and designing to be so. To deny One's Bread to the Hungry, or Drink to the Thirsty, or Clothes to the Naked, is inhuman and cruel; and is such a Sin as a Man is not led into by Inadvertency, or Frailty, or Surprize, but by Hard-heartedness, Selfishness, Covetousness, and other vile Affections. The like may be said of a Man's refusing to visit the Sick, to comfort the Afflicted, or to do the common Offices of Humanity and Courtesy to All Men. The Neglect of such great and plain Duties as these cannot be extenuated into a Sin of *Infirmity*; but it is a wilful, presumptuous, and highly culpable Neglect, if it be at all.

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† 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. ‡ Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. || Matth. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

The Conclusion therefore which I am aiming at from all, is This: That Sins of mere *Infirmity* are not the Sins which either St. PAUL, or our Blessed Lord refer to, as excluding Men from the Kingdom of Heaven: They are quite of another Kind from those now mentioned; and therefore they do not exclude the Person from a State of Grace, but are consistent with the Love of God and the Love of one's Neighbour, and so are not mortal or damning Sins. They are the Spots of God's Children, such as the Best of Men are not intirely free from, though they are not imputed to Them. *In many Things We offend All*, says St. JAMES, Chap. iii. Verse the 2d. He could not mean this of wilful, presumptuous Sins; For of such St. JOHN tells us, that *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil*.† And that *Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin*. Righteous and Good Men do abstain consequently from wilful, presumptuous Sins; otherwise They would not be Righteous, or would cease to be so for the Time: But still They are guilty of many Slips, Failings, and Imperfections; and it is in this Sense only that *We offend All*. We read of ZACHARIAS and his Wife ELIZABETH, that *They were Both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameless*: And yet that very ZACHARIAS was found faulty, in not believing the Message which an Angel brought Him; and He was struck dumb, by Way of Punishment for his Unbelief.‡ That is, as to any grievous, presumptuous Sins, the Man was blameless; but yet He was not altogether or absolutely free from Blame: For He was guilty of Sin in not believing the Angel, but It was a Sin of the slighter Kind, a Sin of *Infirmity*, which He was led into by the Surprize and Suddenness of the Thing, while his Heart was sincere, and his Intentions honest and upright. There is no Man free from these slighter Sins, called Sins of *Infirmity*; and if God should be extreme to mark them, and to impute them to Us, no Flesh could be saved. But the Gospel Covenant is a Covenant of Grace, which makes Allowances for Human Frailties, and does not charge them upon Us as Crimes that shall make a Breach between God and Us. Though We both live and die with these Infirmities about Us, and with these Sins hanging upon Us, We may still die in his Favour, and be admitted into Heaven.

Indeed, the Gospel Rule is a most perfect Rule, requiring and enjoining every Virtue, and every Degree of Virtue; and to fall short of it in any Instance, with any Degree of

† 1 John iii. 8, 9.

‡ Luke i. 6, 20.

of *Wilfulness*, is a Sin: But then the *Gospel Covenant* is so mild and merciful, as not to exact any such *perfect, unflinching Obedience* of Us, under Pain of *Damnation*: Neither doth God expect it of Us, that We should be intirely innocent of all Offences whatever. He is a merciful and gracious God, knows whereof We are made, and remembers that We are but Dust. So long as our Hearts are upright, and We use our best, though weak and imperfect Endeavours, to please Him, He is so good as to accept it of Us, and to pass by the rest. If We have but a prevailing and constant Love of God in our Hearts, abstaining from *wilful, presumptuous Offences* (which are inconsistent with such Love) God is graciously pleased to receive Us *as innocent*, and to accept Us *as righteous*. It is not every slight Deviation from our Duty, nor every Failure in Point of Perfection, that can separate God and Us, while our Hearts are Whole with Him. A wise or good Man will not break with his Friend for every Offence, for a hasty Word, for a slight Affront or Disrespect, for some Indiscretion in Conduct, or Frowardness of Temper, for some Remissness or Tardiness in good Offices, or some Neglects and Failures in Service; *But for Upbraiding or Pride, or disclosing of Secrets, or a treacherous Wound* (as the Wise Man observes) *every Friend will depart*. The Reason is plain: Some Kind of Offences of a slight Nature, are very consistent with true and hearty Affection, and are therefore no Breaches of Love, or Friendship: But Others betray such an Alienation of Affections, or such intolerable Negligence as to What the Laws of Friendship require, that it is highly imprudent or impracticable to keep up any friendly Correspondence longer. In like Manner (to compare great Things with small) our Peace or Friendship with Almighty God, may very well consist with many Indiscretions on our Part, many Slips and Failings, whereby We come short of sinless Perfection: But if We offend of *malicious Wickedness*, if We knowingly, designedly, presumptuously, transgress against Him, then and then only is our Peace with Him broken, and the Alliance dissolved; dissolved I mean for a Time, or till We return and repent: For true Repentance will reinstate Us, and reconcile Us to God, even after wilful, and deliberate, and crying Sins.

But to return to our Point: There is the greatest Reason and Equity imaginable here shewn in making such Distinction between Sins of *Infirmity* and *deliberate* Sins: Because This is estimating of Men according to their Sincerity, and accord-

ing to the Turn of their Hearts, of which God alone is the unerring-Judge, and which He has chiefly Respect to; because indeed the Heart is the principal Thing, the Mind is the Man. In this State of Weakness and Darkness, a Man may easily be conceived to fall into several Errors, or slight Offences; though at the same Time He retains a prevailing Fear of God, and is sincerely endeavouring to please Him in all Things. Men who love Money ever so well, may yet sometimes, contrary to their Principle, and beside their main Intention, take false Measures, whereby They shall suffer Damage; or may not be sharp enough, or sufficiently diligent in taking all Advantages of Gain. It is no Argument, that a Man does not value his Health, if He accidentally and unwarily either draws Distempers upon Himself, or forgets now and then to use the Means proper to prevent or cure them. In like Manner, It is no Argument of a Man's Disregard to Religion, or of his casting off the Fear or Love of God, that He sometimes unwarily and indiscreetly falls short of his Duty, or is not altogether so careful and punctual in his religious Performances as He might have been. God will wink at such Failures, and connive at such Deviations, well knowing that Men are Men, and that *Sincerity of the Heart* is all that is necessary to be required or exacted of Them.

The Result then of what hath been said under this Head is, that Sins of *Infirmity* are very consistent with a *State of Grace*, do not break our Peace with God, nor endanger our Salvation. But it remains still Thirdly,

III.

To inquire what Kind of Conduct or Management, on our Part, is prudent or proper, in Regard to them. As to which, I may presume to say, that though Sins of *Infirmity* are not the *most dangerous*, nor in their Nature *damning*; yet it concerns Us highly to *repent* of them, and to *pray* against them, and to *labour* what We can to be *free* from them, and to get above them.

1. I say, it concerns Us to *repent* of them, that is, to express our Sorrow and Contrition for them, and to humble our selves before God on the Account of them. That they are *Sins* is supposed, though not *wilful* or *deliberate* Sins: And as they are *Sins*, they will stand in Need of *Pardon*; and if they need *Pardon*, they will also require *Repentance*; which is the *Condition* on which *Pardon* is promised, and by *Means* of which it will be *given*. But then the Question is, *What Kind of Repentance?*

Repentance? And the Answer is, a *general* Repentance may suffice, not extending to every *Particular*: Nor is it necessary that such Repentance be *completely practical*, amounting to an *entire Cessation* from the Sins of *that Kind*. Both these Things shall be explained presently.

First, I say, a *general* Repentance may suffice. We need not, We cannot be *particular* in all our Sins of *Infirmity*. *Who can tell how oft He offendeth in this Kind?* We are not aware perhaps of one half, or a tenth Part of our Failures; and therefore cannot particularly repent of them: And even those which we have been aware of, while fresh and new, yet easily slip out of our Memories; and the very Number of them, as they happen daily, or hourly, is much too great to be distinctly considered or retained. DAVID says of his own Sins, that *they were more in Number than the Hairs of his Head*. I suppose, he took in his Sins of *Infirmity* to raise the Account; otherwise this Expression of his is by no Means reconcilable with Scripture History, or the Character of so good a Man as DAVID was. But from hence We may judge of the Number of those slighter Sins, which human Frailty is ever liable to, and which therefore are sometimes called Sins of *daily Incurstion*. It cannot be necessary either to remember them *distinctly*, or to make *particular* Confession of them. It is sufficient if We think and speak of them in *general* as Deviations from our Duty, as Imperfections known or unknown, repenting of them in the Lump, and humbling Our Selves before God for them. *Wilful and deliberate* Sins, as they are *knowingly* committed, and as they leave a Wound upon the *Conscience*, as they are further very *provoking* and grievous, and make a *fatal Breach* between the Offender and Almighty God; These therefore require a *very particular Repentance*, and a more *especial Sorrow* and *Humiliation*. They are very easily remembered, being few in Comparison, and of such a Kind as cannot easily be forgotten; and therefore a Man ought, in his Confession of, and Humiliations for Sins of *that Nature*, to be as *particular and distinct* as possible: But Sins of *Infirmity* are too many to be recounted, or even to be observed, and very slight in Comparison; and therefore it is that they neither require, nor indeed admit of any Thing more than a *general Repentance*.

But there is a further Difference between the Repentance proper to *wilful Sins*, and the Repentance required for *human Frailties*. A Man must not be content merely to *confess* and to *declare* his *Sorrow* for *wilful Sins*; but He must *renounce* and *for sake* them, and never rest satisfied, till He has divested

Himself of them. But as to Sins of *Infirmity*, the Case is different: They are such as a good Man may be content to live with, and die with; and That, because He never can entirely remove them from Him. They are *inseparable from Flesh and Blood*, are interwoven into our very Frame, and are as *natural* and *necessary*, in some Degree at least, as it is to be *weak* or *frail*, *unthinking* or *unobserving*; or, as it is to be liable to *Forgetfulness*, *Fatigue*, *Weariness*, and the like. We are never to expect to get above every *Infirmity*, or to correct every *Failing*. The Best of Men cannot do it; the Greatest of God's Saints *have not*: And therefore it is, that We say of this Case, that it is not necessary for our Repentance to be *completely practical*. We may express our Sorrow and Concern even for the Sins of *Infirmity*, which We fall into; But as We can never hope to gain the entire Mastery over them, or to get above them; so, neither is it required of Us, in Order either to our Peace here, or Happiness hereafter. But then,

2. Besides a *general Repentance*, though not *completely practical*, for Sins of this Kind; We should further add our devout *Prayers* to God, to make Us every Day less and less liable to them, and not to impute them. The Prayer of the Holy *Psalmist* in this Case is very observable, though a very short one: *Who can tell how oft He offendeth? O cleanse Thou Me from my Secret Faults!* So the Words run in our Old Translation, *Psal. xix. 12.* The *Secret Faults* are well interpreted here to mean *Sins of Infirmity*, as opposed to known *presumptuous* Sins, which He prays to be kept from in the Verse next following. When He prays to be *cleansed* from *Secret Faults*, We may understand two Things; *First*, to be *acquitted, pardoned, justified*, through the *Mercy* of God, not *imputing* to Him those *smaller Offences*; and *Secondly*, to be more and more *strengthened* by God's *Grace* to *conquer* the *Infirmities* He laboured under. Upon the Whole, it is a Petition for Pardon of past Sins, and for greater Degrees of Perfection for the Future: And such a Prayer may well become Every good Man now, with Regard to Sins of *Infirmity*. He ought to beg *Pardon* of God for them, as they are really *Sins*: And it is of near Concernment to Us, to pray to God daily for his *Grace* to enable Us to arrive to still higher and higher Degrees of Perfection. The greater Perfection We attain to, the more secure are We against falling back; and not only so, but We thereby become qualified for a higher and nobler Reward. Even *Sins of Infirmity*, the more numerous they are, and the oftner they occur, so
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much the more dangerous are they; and if they be not carefully watched against, they may gradually sink Us into an ill State, may pave the Way to *wilful, deliberate Sins*. For this Reason principally We ought to *pray* against them, and to implore God's Mercy and Assistance, that He may please to pardon and forgive What is past, and to guard and strengthen Us for the Time to come.

3. The *Third* and last Article of our Conduct, is to use our best *Endeavours* along with our Prayers, to guard, as much as possibly We can, even against those smaller Sins, lest they should lead to greater.

Sins of *Infirmity*, if indulged, if consented to, if suffered to rest upon Us, are no longer Sins of mere *Infirmity*, but grow up into *wilful, deliberate Sins*. Their very Name and Nature supposes some unavoidable *Weakness*, and not *Wilfulness*, to have the principal Hand in Them. They are *Infirmities*, because, though We strive against them, and do our best to avoid them, yet We are surprized into them, and overcome by them. When We have done, and still continue to do, as much as lies in our Power, to correct our Failings, and to fill up our Defects; We may then very fairly give the Name of *Infirmities* to what remains: But if We use not the proper Means to correct and amend, so far as may be, such our Failings; those very Failings will be *imputed* to Us as *wilful and deliberate Sins*. For the Purpose: Wandering and Distraction in Prayer may, in the general, be justly reckoned among the *Sins of Infirmity*: But if a Man tamely suffer such a *Habit* to grow upon Him, and take no Pains to prevent, or lessen it; if He neither strive against it, nor so much as endeavour to correct it, in such Measure at least as it may be corrected; to Him it shall be *imputed* as a *wilful Sin*, and shall no longer pass under the soft Name of *Human Frailty*. So again: Angry and passionate Words, upon some Occasions, exceeding the Bounds of Moderation and Meekness, may be rightly enough numbered among the Sins of *Infirmity*: But yet, if a Man frequently fall into such irregular Heats; if He chuse so to do, and use not his best *Endeavours* to subdue his Passions, and to reform his Tongue; to Him such intemperate Sallies will be imputed as *presumptuous Sins*, and not Sins of *Infirmity*. The same is the Case in all other Sins called Sins of *Infirmity*; they are no otherwise such, but as a Man has done his best to correct them, and yet sinks under them: It is therefore absolutely necessary for Every good Man to labour, strive, and endeavour what He can, against every the *smallest Sin*, or slightest Offence (as it is thought) because it is this Striving and Endeavouring

veering against it which at length renders it slight, and pitiable in the Sight of God: For this is our *Apology*, this our *Plea*, for our committing Sins of that Kind; that *We did what We could to avoid them*; and at length fell into them by *Surprise*, by *Inadvertency*, by *Weakness*, when *We did not intend it*, when *We intended otherwise*.

Upon the Whole then, We are obliged constantly to *watch*, *pray*, and *endeavour* against all Kinds of Sins, Sins of *Infirmity* as well as *Others*; and That, in Order to stand clear of *wilful Sin*, and to preserve our Peace with God. Venture not upon any Sin, under the Notion of its being a *small Sin* only: For it is not *small* if it be *wilful*; or if it be readily and fully consented to. *Wilful Disobedience*, even in a *slight Matter*, is no slight *Thing*. The *Wilfulness* shewn in it makes the Offence *grievous*: And however small the *Matter* of it may seem, 'the *Contempt* is great, and is itself a *high Crime*. Let Us therefore make it our conscientious Care to avoid, as much as possible, *all Sins whatever*, great and small, and to approach every Day nearer and nearer to Religious Perfection. And may God enable Us, by his Grace, to get Ground of our *Infirmities*, and to improve daily in every good Word and Work.





S E R M O N XI.

The Nature and Danger of *Presumptuous Sins.*

PSALM XIX. 13.

Keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins: Let them not have Dominion over Me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great Transgression.

THESE are the Words of pious DAVID, the undoubted Author of this religious Song, or *Psalms*. In the Verse going before, He had put up his Petition for Pardon of all the Failures and Errors of his Life past, even of such as had escaped his Notice, or had slipped out of his Memory: *Who can understand his Errors? cleanse Thou Me from secret Faults.* But besides those slighter Offences, He was aware also of the Offences of a more heinous Kind; and therefore immediately subjoins a Prayer against them likewise: *Keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins: Let them not have Dominion over Me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great Transgression.*

The Words, as they run in our *New Translation*, are not difficult to understand, and so will need the less Opening. Indeed, the Words of the *Original* have been thought capable of a very different Version, and consequently of as different a Sense: But I shall not take Notice of Niceties of that Kind, which would be both dry and useless. The Sense which they bear in our *Translation* is a very good one, and is judiciously preferred before any Other. I proceed therefore to consider the Matter contained in it. In discoursing hereupon I shall take this Method.

- I. To treat of *Sins* in general, their Nature, Kinds, and Measures.
- II.

II. To treat of *presumptuous* Sins in particular, with the Malignancy and Danger of them, and the Concern We ought to have to stand clear of them.

III. To close all with proper Advice and Directions how to avoid them.

I.

I propose to treat of *Sins* in *general*, their Nature, Kinds, and Measures.

Sin is rightly defined, A Transgression of God's Law: And is either the *doing* of Something which God has *forbidden*, or the *leaving undone* what God has *commanded*. The *doing* what We *ought not* to do, is called a *Sin of Commission*: And the *not doing* what We *ought*, is stiled a *Sin of Omission*. In the One, We commit a *Trespas*; in the Other, We neglect a *Duty*; and either Way We *sin*. Sins of either Kind may differ in their Degrees of *greater*, and *less*, according to their different Matter, Circumstances, and Aggravations.

The *Stoick Philosophers*, and some Few of the less considerate *Christians*, have pretended, that all Sins are *equal*. Their Reasons for it are not worth the mentioning: For the Conceit is so groundless, and so repugnant to the common Sense of Mankind, that barely to speak of it, is to expose it, and it carries its own Confutation with it. For, a Man must be very weak to imagine, that *Theft*, suppose, is as great a Sin as *Murder*; or *Fornication* as high a Crime as *Adultery*; or *telling a Lye* as wicked a Thing as *robbing a House*, or *plundering a Church*, or *firing a Town*. Every Body is sensible of a Difference between high Crimes, and trivial Trespases; between Sins of the first Magnitude, and slight Offences: Our Lord therefore compares Some to *Gnats*, while He compares Others to *Camels*; Some to *Motes* in the *Eye*, Others to *Beams*.

Seeing therefore that Sins are *not equal*, but differing in *Degree*, as the Text also intimates; the next Enquiry is, What makes the Difference, or by what Rules or Measures We may judge of it.

There are two Considerations to be taken in, which seem to be the principal in determining of the Greatness of any Sin. One is the *Matter* of the Sin itself, or the *mischievous Tendency* of it: The Other is, the *Degree* of *Malice* or *Wickedness* in the Person committing it.

Moral Evil, the same with *Sin*, is the *choosing* Something which is *naturally* Evil, or is of *mischievous Tendency*. The Case

Case is plain in all Instances prohibited by the Law of Nature: And as to Cases prohibited by the *positive* Law of God, the *Prohibition* brings them under the same Rule: For, then a Man cannot break through the Prohibition, without affronting, contemning, disobeying Almighty God: and That is *naturally Evil*, and of *evil Tendency*; it is Rebellion against the Creator, which is of pernicious Example, and carries many mischievous Consequences in it, with respect both to Man's temporal and eternal Welfare. I say then, first judge We of the *Heinousness* of a Sin by the *mischievous Tendency* of it. Thus, to instance in Matters of a moral Nature, Stealing is not so hurtful as Maiming; nor is Maiming so mischievous as Murder; nor is Murder of an Equal, so mischievous as the Murder of a Superior, a Magistrate, a Father, or the Prince We are subject to.

In Matters of a *positive* Nature, neglecting to defend or to maintain the Gospel, when commanded, is a grievous Sin; because the Salvation of Thousands may be concerned in it: But the opposing the Gospel is much worse, and is of yet greater Malignity. Neglecting the Sacraments, or other solemn Ordinances of God, is a great Sin, as it is slighting God's Goodness, affronting his Authority, and setting a very ill Example: But rejecting them utterly, or contemning them, is high Profaneness, and of most pernicious Tendency, as it is striking at all *instituted* Religion directly, and at *Morality* in Consequence; and so, in the last Result, at the general Happiness of Mankind, here and hereafter.—This may serve to explain what I mean by the *evil Tendency* of any Sin.

The other Consideration is, the Degree of *Wilfulness* in the Person committing it. Whatever Mischief a Man may do, He is no farther chargeable with it, than as He made it his *Choice*; no farther than He knew what He was doing, and wilfully chose it. A *mad Man* may do a great deal of Mischief, but in him it is no Sin: The like may be said of a *natural Fool*, or *Idiot*. Where there is no *Reason*, nor *Choice*, there can be no *Sin*. And supposing a Man, under the Use of Reason, to do Mischief, either being compelled to it, or not knowing that it is Mischief, or not considering it, or not designing it; These will be all so many Articles in his Favour, either to acquit Him entirely of Blame, or to excuse and extenuate, in Proportion to the Degree of the Necessity He was under. Hence it is, that Divines have distinguished Sins into *three Kinds*; called *Sins of Ignorance*, *Sins of Infirmary*, and *Sins of Presumption*. The *Will* is supposed to concur more or less in *all*, otherwise they could not be Sins;

Sins; but They have their Names from what is *most prevailing* and predominant in Each. If there be more of *Ignorance* than *Wilfulness* in it, it is a *Sin of Ignorance*; if there be more of *Infirmity* than *Wilfulness* in it, it is a *Sin of Infirmity*: But if there be more of *Wilfulness* than of *Either*, or *Both the former*, it is then a *wilful Sin*; and That is what my Text calls *presumptuous Sin*. To say something more particular of Each:

1. Of a *Sin of Ignorance*: Such was the Sin of ABIMELECH, when He took unto Him ABRAHAM's Wife, not knowing Her to be his Wife, but supposing Her to be his Sister only. What He did was with an upright Heart, so far; ignorantly consenting to Adultery: But yet, because He might have made farther Enquiry, and might have informed Himself better, if He had had Patience, and had not been too precipitate; He was therefore not *wholly* innocent: A Sin He was guilty of, but a *Sin of Ignorance*; and therefore He found Mercy at the Hands of God.

A second Example, but more approaching to a Sin of *Presumption*, was St. PAUL's persecuting the Church of Christ. He did it ignorantly, and in *Unbelief*, out of an *honest* and *well-meant Zeal*: But He *sinned* in so doing, and *grievously* too; because He had had several Opportunities of knowing better; and He had seen enough of the miraculous Powers of the Church, to convince a Man of his Education and Abilities, if He had duly attended to them. However, because his Ignorance in that Case was not entirely affected, nor owing to *Envy*, *Malice*, or other corrupt Principle; his Sin, in that Instance, may pass among the *Sins of Ignorance*, rather than among the *Sins of Presumption*: It was blameable, but pitiable at the same Time; for *Ignorance* lessens and *extenuates* a Fault, more or less, according as the Ignorance was more or less *wilful*. If the Ignorance had been perfectly *involuntary* and *unavoidable*, it would have intirely acquitted Him of all Blame: *If you were blind*, says our Lord to the PHARISEES, *You should have no Sin*†. But when the Ignorance is in some Measure *voluntary*, and in some Measure *involuntary*, there it does not take off the Guilt intirely, but lessens and *extenuates* it in Proportion: *He that knew not his Lord's Will, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes*‡. Such is the Nature and Description of a *Sin of Ignorance*.

2. Next to which is the *Sin of Infirmity*, owing to the *Frailty of the Flesh*, or *Impetuosity of the Affections*, as the former is to the *Blindness of the Understanding*. Our Blessed Lord

† John ix. 41.

‡ Luke xii. 48.

Lord well describes the Nature of it, where He says ; *The Spirit truly is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* Sins of *Infirmity* are mostly seen in Sins of *Omission* ; in our Neglect of Duties or our Defects in performing them ; owing to Forgetfulness, Inadvertency, Heaviness, Listlessness, and the like. But there are other Cases where Sins of *Infirmity* steal in, by Surprise, by sudden Passion, by the Vehemence of a Temptation, which over-powers the Mind before the Person has Time to consider, or recollect. I suppose, PETER's Denial of his Lord may be an Instance of such a Sin. His Heart was very sincere and honest ; He was suddenly set upon by an unlooked for Temptation ; He fell unexpectedly, and that but once, against his usual Courage, and his repeated Resolutions ; and He no sooner recollected Himself, but He repented in a Flood of Tears. All these Circumstances shew, that there was a great deal more of *Infirmity* than of *Wilfulness* in it ; and We may add, that there seems to have been a more than ordinary Desertion brought upon Him, in that Instance, to check the over great Confidence He had reposed in Himself, and to teach Him Humility and Caution for the future.

Much might be usefully said about Sins of *Infirmity*, to distinguish them from Sins of *Presumption*, and to prevent People's deceiving Themselves with the Plea of *Infirmity*, where They have really no Right or Title to it. But the Subject is copious, and would lead me too far. It may be sufficient, just to have hinted what the Name imports ; and I pass on to the third Kind of Sins, Sins of a Scarlet Dye.

3. Sins of *Presumption* ; such as have more of *Wilfulness* and Malice prepense, than of *Ignorance* or *Infirmity* in them ; when a Man sins with a high Hand, against the Dictates of Reason, and the Checks of Conscience ; not merely through *Ignorance*, or *human Frailty*, but *wilfully*, through the Stubbornness and Perverseness of a depraved, distorted Will. It will be easy to distinguish this malignant Kind from either of the former. All premeditated Offences, though the Matter of them should appear slight, come under the Name and Notion of *presumptuous* Sins : For wilful Disobedience to a plain Command, though in a small Matter, is no small Thing. This We see in the Case of our First Parents : The tasting of the forbidden Fruit, was seemingly a slight Matter ; but yet, because the Command was express, and the Disobedience *wilful* and *presumptuous*, God resented the Contempt, and punished it with a very remarkable and memorable Severity.

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Among *presumptuous* Sins We must reckon all those which are of a high and scandalous Nature; such as *Murder, Adultery, Perjury, Sacrilege, Fornication, Robbery, Extortion, Oppression, Blasphemy*, and the like; because those Sins are in their own Nature vile and mischievous, and known to be so; that a Man cannot be supposed to fall into them through mere *Ignorance*, or *Infirmity*, but through the Willfulness and Stubbornness of a depraved Will.

As to Neglects or Omissions of Duty, many of these also are reducible to the Class of *presumptuous* Sins; such as customary Neglect of known and plain Duties; absenting from Public Worship, on the *Sunday* especially, without Necessity; living in constant Contempt or Neglect of the Holy Communion; refusing the common Offices of Humanity and Christian Charity, when We see proper Occasions for the Exercise of them; neglecting to feed the Hungry, or to clothe the Naked, or to commiserate and assist the Afflicted, in Proportion to our Abilities and Circumstances. Those Acts of Mercy are so much the Badges of our Christian Profession, and are so strongly insisted upon as Matters of indispensable Duty, quite through Both Testaments; that We can neither plead *Ignorance* nor *Infirmity* for our Non-performance. Omissions of this Kind are *wilful, presumptuous, damning*: So our Blessed Lord Himself intimates, where He tells Us, that the Articles of Inquiry at the Day of Judgment will run chiefly on those Heads; and Men shall be either acquitted or condemned accordingly. So much in the general about the Nature, Quality, and Kinds of *presumptuous* Sins. I proceed now,

II.

To be more particular in setting forth the *Malignancy* and *Danger* of them, and the Concern we ought to have to stand clear of them.

You may observe of Holy DAVID in the *Psalms* before Us, how He prays, that God would pardon his smaller Sins, and *cleanse* Him, by remitting, or not imputing them. But as to those greater *presumptuous* Sins, He begs to be wholly kept back from them, to be undefiled with them. He speaks of them also as amounting to *great Transgression*, and which alone could debar Him of the Satisfaction of having an *upright* Heart, and a good Conscience. His Errors and Infirmities, He believed, a merciful God would pass by and overlook, upon his general Confession and Repentance: But the *presumptuous*

sumptuous Sins He was greatly afraid of, being such as might make a most fatal Breach between God and Him, hard to be made up again and reconciled. Nor were his Fears, in this Case, at all unreasonable or groundless, if We consider the malignant Qualities and mischievous Effects of *presumptuous* Sinning.

1. For, first, *presumptuous* Sins spring from the Corruption of the Heart, from some evil Lust, or Affection, some Predominancy of Pride, Avarice, or Voluptuousness. Men will not run upon Sins of that Kind, to provoke Almighty God wilfully, and daringly, till the World has taken Hold of Them, and estranged their Hearts (in a great Measure) from Him. It is hanging out the Flag of Defiance, and entering into a Kind of open War or Rebellion against Heaven. While a Man has Ignorance or Surprize to plead in Excuse for Himself, his Heart may be still right with God: But when He *wilfully* and *presumptuously* offends, it is very plain that his Heart is then alienated, and that He has struck up an Alliance with the World in Opposition to God.

2. We may consider farther, that after sinning in this Manner, and to this Degree, it is very hard to repent. We see This in common Friendships One with Another. While a Man knows that He intended no Ill to a Friend, but has unwarily done Him a Prejudice, loving and respecting Him all the Time; He easily returns, and with an open Countenance makes his Apology, and asks Pardon: But if He has acted against his Friend with Malice prepenſe, and has designedly affronted, or injured Him; He grows sullen, and shy, and perhaps shuns the Acquaintance ever after. There is something of the like Affection left upon the Mind of a *presumptuous* Sinner with Respect to God. He from that Instant contracts a strange Aversion to Him; He is afraid to approach Him, conscious to Himself, that He has been acting treacherously; nay and perhaps strongly inclined, if not resolved, even to do so again; at least not fully resolved against it: He has therefore little or no Heart to pray to God, or to ask Pardon, except it be in a slight superficial Manner, as Words of Course. By Degrees, the Breach grows wider between God and Him; and He stands off more and more, till at length He renounces, in a Manner, all further Acquaintance with his Maker. This is often the Result of giving Way, at first, to *presumptuous* Sins. But,

3. Supposing, thirdly, that a Man relents soon after, and is disposed to repent heartily and turn to God; yet it will be difficult for Him so to heal the Breach which those Sins have

have made, as to come with Delight, and humble Confidence to his God, as before. The Remembrance of his Sins of Unfaithfulness will, for some Time, bring a Cloud over his Mind; and He will, of Course, be full of Fear, Doubtfulness, and Anxiety; hardly knowing how to trust Himself for the future, hardly daring to look up with Chearfulness to God.

I do not know a more affecting, or more melancholy Example of what I am now mentioning, than DAVID Himself. From the Time He fell into presumptuous Sins, in the Matter of **URIAH** (though He was penitent for it, and a Pardon was granted Him by the Hand of a Prophet) yet how sorrowful and troubled was his afflicted Mind all his Life after! He never recovered his wonted Courage and Vivacity; He hung down his Head, and went mourning all the Day long; his Spirit was bowed down with Grief, and He was scarce able to bear up under the afflicting Hand of God. He seems not to have been the same Man as formerly, nor to have kept up either the Figure, or the Character in Life which He had before done. What with the Afflictions God sent Him in his Family and his Kingdom, and what with his Remorse for his Transgressions, He appears to have been, as it were, unmanned, and sunk in his Spirits for the rest of his Life, and to have behaved and acted below his Character. *Repentance* is the best Thing We can retreat to, and is indeed the only *Plank* left whereon to escape, in such a Case: But in the mean while, how much better is *Innocence*, than the most Holy and Solemn *Repentance*!

It may indeed be said, that DAVID's Sin in that Instance was very great for the *Matter* of it, as well as its being presumptuous. Very true: But *every presumptuous Sin*, in Proportion, brings its Train of Mischiefs with it. We see it in its best Light, when We take a View of it in a Person who was sincerely penitent. The most melancholy Consideration of all is, that *presumptuous Sins* generally harden the Conscience, and carry the Man off from bad to worse, till they sink Him down to a State of Stupidity here, and to Perdition hereafter. From all which it is manifest, how highly it concerns every Man to be extremely cautious how He ventures upon Sins of this Kind, and to use all possible Endeavours to stand clear of *wilful and deliberate*, that is, *presumptuous Sins*. It remains now thirdly,

III.

To offer some proper Advice and Directions, how to avoid them.

1. The first Care, most certainly is, to be instant in *Prayers* to Almighty God, to preserve Us, by his preventing Grace, from falling into them. There is no firm Security but in God's Mercy, so disposing the Affairs of Life, and all outward Occurrences, as not to expose Us to Temptations beyond our Strength. There lies our principal Security, to throw Our Selves into his Arms, and to commit Our Selves entirely to his Protection. This, as I said, is to be done by our constant and fervent *Prayers*. God expects to be asked and intreated by Us, and has made it the Condition, and instrumental Means of conveying his Grace and Blessing to Us. But besides this, *Prayer* has naturally a good Effect upon the Mind of the Suppliant; It preserves a constant Awe and Reverence for God; and is keeping up a Kind of Acquaintance and Intercourse with Heaven. It carries in it a Repugnancy and Opposition to all *wilful* Sins, and has the Force of a standing Declaration or Remonstrance against them. With what Heart, with what Face, can a Man carry on a daily Correspondence and Converse with God in Prayer, and at the same Time be in Confederacy with Satan, presumptuously rebelling against the God He prays to? One would conclude, that, either continuing to pray, would make a Man afraid and ashamed to sin in that high Manner; or else, that his so sinning must make Him leave off his Prayers: For those two Things seem to stand at the greatest Distance possible, and are scarce consistent with each other. But secondly,

2. After *Prayers* to God to assist Us, We must next use our best *Endeavours* to help Our Selves; exerting to the utmost those Powers and Faculties which God hath given Us, for his Glory, and for our own Happiness. We should consider seriously of all the most proper and likely *Means* to be made Use of, in order to prevent our falling into *presumptuous* Sins.

The first and principal, is, to look well to our *Hearts*, that They be set *right*, and kept with all Diligence. We may observe, that sinning *presumptuously* is, as it were, revolting from God, and running off into another Interest. Our Hearts are not *whole* with God when We do it. We have let our Affections go astray from Him, placing them some-
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where else; upon the alluring Objects of worldly Riches, Honour, or Pleasure. This is undoubtedly the Case, as often as Men run into *presumptuous* Sins. Wherefore the true and most effectual Way to prevent our doing so, is to look well to our Hearts, and to keep them fix'd where They ought to be, upon God alone. *Set your Affections on Things above, and not on Things on the Earth.* This is striking at the Root of all *presumptuous* Sins, is stifling them in their Birth. We shall not wilfully Sin against God, till We have learned to love the World more than We love Him; till We have suffered Satan and his Emissaries to steal our Affections from God, and to transfer them to other Objects. Take We Care then, in the first Place, to govern our Affections, and to point them to their true Object.

And in Order to do This the more effectually; our next Care should be to be often *reflecting* upon the infinite *Value of Heavenly Things*, above all *Earthly Enjoyments*: How far Eternity is preferable to Time, and God to the World: How slight, empty, and transient all secular Things are; not worthy to be compared with the Joys that shall be hereafter. These and other the like Considerations, often repeated and treasured up in our Minds, will be of Use to fix our Affections upon Things above, and so to prevent our falling into *presumptuous* Sins.

Our further Care should be to keep out of Temptations as much as possible; that so We may carry the same good Thoughts the more constantly about Us, and not let them slip. The Misfortune of Man is, that, tho' He has resolved ever so well, and has armed Himself with many excellent Meditations; yet new Occasions, and unexpected Occurrences, may suggest new Thoughts, and give quite another Turn to the Mind. The safest Way therefore is to avoid, as much as We can, all such Occasions: And, as We pray not to be led into Temptation, so let Us take Care, not to run into it of our own Accord.

The last Thing I shall mention, is, to be watchful and cautious in our whole Conduct, and especially to beware of the Beginnings of Things. It is the Policy of Satan to draw Men on by Degrees, to intice Them first into Something of doubtful Appearance, Something that borders upon Sin, and yet strictly is not Sin, or has an innocent Look however; and so to proceed Step by Step to What at length is undoubtedly sinful and dangerous. The Way to avoid this Snare, is to be wary and circumspect; not to venture to the utmost Limits of what is Lawful; but to keep at a due Distance,

Distance, and to observe our Compass; to deny Our Selves some innocent Liberties for Fear of their betraying Us farther; and not to trust Our Selves where We suspect the Combat may be unequal, or our Strength fail Us.

By These, and Other the like prudent Precautions, God's Grace preventing and assisting Us, we may preserve Our Selves from presumptuous Sins, may be undeiled and innocent from the great Transgression.

The Milder, Cause, and Rewards of a Mind.

PROV. XVIII.



THIS Passage of Scripture may be rendered otherwise with a slight Variation in the latter Part of the Sentence, thus: The Spirit of a Man (or a brave Man) will fail him in his way; but a wounded Spirit, will fall under it. The Words, as I conceive, carry in them an important Lesson of Instruction, though it is rather obscurely intimated, than directly expressed. Here is a Caution given, or intimated rather, against yielding too far to any Mischances or Troubles; against losing our Spirit's link, or our Courage, till Us in our Day of Calamity. It is of infinite Advantage, under all Emergencies, to keep up Strength of Mind, and to bear up against Distresses or Difficulties, with a firm and undaunted Heart. For a vigorous Mind, a manly Spirit, will support Us under bodily Infirmities within, or out of Accidents without; But if the Spirit itself be broken and cast down, if the Mind becomes feeble, and sinks under the Weight, What can be then thought on to raise it up? When the heart's incentives give Way, and the main Underprop fails, What can then be expected but sudden and irreparable Ruin? The Turn and the Plunder of the Expedition in the Text is very like to what our Lord makes Use of in a different Subject: Where He says, If the Salt hath lost its Savor, whither shall it be salted? If that which should

S E R M O N XII.

The Misery, Causes, and Remedies of a *dejected Mind*.

PROV. XVIII. 14.

The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmary; but a wounded Spirit who can bear?

THIS Passage of Scripture may be rendered otherwise with a slight Variation in the latter Part of the Sentence, thus: *The Spirit of a Man* (of a brave Man) *will sustain his Infirmary; but a wounded (dejected) Spirit, Who shall raise it up?*

The Words, as I conceive, carry in them an important Lesson of Instruction, though it is rather *obliquely* insinuated, than *directly* expressed. Here is a Caution given, or intimated rather, against yielding too far to any Misfortunes or Troubles; against letting our Spirits sink, or our Courage fail Us in our Day of Calamity. It is of infinite Advantage, under all Emergencies, to keep up Strength of Mind, and to bear up against Disasters or Difficulties, with a firm and undaunted Heart. For, a vigorous Mind, a manly Spirit, will support Us under bodily Infirmities within, or cross Accidents without: But if the Spirit itself be broken and cast down, if the Mind becomes feeble, and sinks under the Weight, What can be then thought on to raise it up? When the Buttresses themselves give Way, and the main Underprops fail, What can then be expected but sudden and irrevocable Ruin? The Turn and the Manner of the Expression in the Text is very like to what our Lord makes Use of in a different Subject; where He says, *If the Salt hath lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted?*† If That which should

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† Matth. v. 13. Mark ix. 50. Luke xiv. 34.

season other Things, does itself want seasoning, what can then be done to it? And so in the Instance of the Text, *off* that which should support the weaker Parts, does *itself* want supporting, what Remedy can then be hoped for? The Case is then melancholy indeed, and beyond all Recovery. Great Care therefore should be taken in Time, to prevent, if possible, so sad a Crisis, and that no Calamities whatever be permitted to reduce Us to this so disconsolate Extremity. Such I take to be the general Drift and Purport of the Text now before Us. The Subject therefore of my Discourse must be *a troubled and dejected Mind*.

I. The *Misery* of it.

II. The *Causes* which lead to it.

III. The proper *Remedies* or *Preservatives* against it.

The Subject is undoubtedly very useful, and may well deserve our attentive Thoughts, and serious Application.

I.

I shall begin with some brief Strictures upon the *miserable Case* of a *dejected broken Mind*.—*A wounded Spirit who can bear?* as *our* Translation renders it; or, *Who can raise it up?* as the *other*. Both Rendings are grammatical, and We may very well take in both Senses, as they are both of them true and pertinent: For the *Misery* of a *broken Spirit* is, that it is *intolerable* to bear, and is *without Support*, or *Remedy*.

The Words of the Text have been vulgarly understood of a wounded *Conscience*, tending to *Despair*: But I see no Reason for confining the Text to that Case only. The Words are spoken of a *wounded Spirit* in the general, wounded by Grief, and sinking under its Load of Troubles; but not expressing either the *particular* Kind of Troubles, or the *special* Causes they spring from. I shall enumerate the several Causes which may be supposed in such Cases, under my next Head of Discourse. But at present all I have to take Notice of, is, the sad and disconsolate Condition of a *dejected broken Mind*, be the Cause of it what it will.

But, in Order to have a right Understanding of this Case, let Us consider, in the first Place, what a *dejected Mind*, or a *wounded Spirit*, means.

We may observe, that all Manner of Trouble and *Misery*, as felt by the Patient, is resolvable into *Pain of Body*, or *Pain of Mind*; into some *uneasy Sensations*, which we commonly

monly call *Pain*, or *uneasy Thoughts* and *Reflections*, which We commonly call *Anguish*. Strictly speaking, all *Pains* that We feel are in the *Mind*, or in the *Soul*. The *Body* is but the *Organ* or *Instrument* which transmits the *Pain* to the *Soul*. The *Soul* only *feels*, in and through the *Body*: So that every *uneasy Sensation* of the *Body*, as We call it, is properly the *Soul's*. And besides *uneasy Sensations*, the *Mind*, over and above, hath many *uneasy Reflections*, which *increase the Pain*, and more than double the *Misery*.

These Things being premised, We may the more clearly perceive of what Advantage it is in all Kinds of Uneasinesses, to have a *Mind* well fortified and steeled against Them. The *Mind*, by fencing against the *Mischief*, keeps it out in a great Measure, and does not let in one half of the *Anguish*: While the *Spirit* bears up against it with manly Courage, it wards off the *Blow*, or breaks the Force of the *Impression*. And if you would know more particularly *how* it does it, you may please to consider, that no *Pain* whatever is so much as felt, any longer than while it is *attended to*, or *reflected upon*: But there is that Force in the *Mind*, when firm and well resolved, that it can turn the *Thoughts* off from dwelling upon the present or threatening *Pain*, and can employ itself with brave and comfortable *Reflections*. This is what the Text means in saying, that *the Spirit of a Man will sustain its Infirmity*. It will bear up against *Danger* or *Trouble*, will be so flushed with a *Sense of Honour*, and other generous *Views*, and with high and noble *Expectations*, that the *Sense of Pain* shall scarce be felt at all, or shall be slight in Comparison. Those other joyous *Reflections* will counterbalance it, or will so fill the *Mind*, as scarce to leave Room for the Reception of any Thing else. This is what We call *Strength of Mind*, and sometimes *Fortitude*: And it is of admirable Use to repell Uneasiness and *Pain*, and to prevent its making any deep or durable *Impressions*. Something indeed will be felt by Us after We have done all We can: For there is no being perfectly insensible to *Smart*, or unconcerned at *Misfortunes*. But the *Smart* being less attended to, in such a Case, receives no Increase by any galling *Reflections*; yea, it is much abated and deadened by joyous *Thoughts* and high *Expectations*. Thus *the Spirit of a Man*, while firm and erect, *sustains its Infirmity*, and becomes a Kind of *Armour* of *Proof* against either *inward Pains* or *outward Disasters*.

But if once the *Spirit* itself begins to yield and give Way; if the *Mind*, by continual *Troubles*, or long *Struggling*, at length faints and sinks under them; then comes the Case which

which the Text speaks of, the Case of a *wounded Spirit*, a dejected broken Mind. The Misery of it is manifest, in some Measure, from what hath been already said. It is like giving up the Fort, or Citadel, upon which the Enemy enters, and makes terrible Havock and Devastation. While the Mind retained its Force and Strength, the Adversary was kept at some Distance, and not suffered to do much Harm: But as soon as ever the Mind loses its Courage, and lays down its Arms, the Adversary rushes in, and makes fearful Ravages. To speak out of Metaphor; when the Spirit thus sinks, and bears up no longer, then every Calamity puts on the blacker Face, and every Pain and Uneasiness stings to the quick, and is much increased by galling Reflections. The Mind is haunted with dark Images, with melancholy Scenes of Horror and Distress. The Man sits down and indulges his Sorrow, hugs his Grief, abandons Himself to Impatience, bitter Wailing, and Despair, refusing to be comforted, or so much as to hear of the Name. This may serve for an imperfect Description of a *wounded Spirit*, and of the Misery attending it. But as the Mind may be more or less wounded, with almost infinite Variety of Degree; so the Calamity of the Case is *more or less* grievous, and of Consequence *more or less* removed from Possibility of Recovery.

Having described the Case as briefly as I well could, I now proceed, as I proposed, to my *Second* general Head:

II.

To point out the principal *Causes* which lead to this *melancholy Extremity*. The occasional and immediate Causes of this Malady are either from *without*, or from *within*; either from *outward Afflictions*, or *inward Disorder* of Body, or Trouble of Conscience.—I shall consider them severally and distinctly.

1. The *outward Calamities* of Life are many and various. The most afflicting, generally, are not those which bring the greatest Smart, or the acutest Pain with Them; but those rather, which bear hardest upon the *soft and tender Passions*.

One shall scarce know a Man overtaken with *Melancholy* on account of what He suffers by the *Gout*, or *Stone*; or by an *Ulcer*, or the cutting off Limbs, or other *bodily Pains*. And yet for the Loss of *Sons* and *Daughters*, or other *dear Friends* and *Relations*, One may find several overwhelmed with Grief unconsolable. The Reason, I suppose, is, the exceeding great Delicacy and Tenderness of those *soft Passions*, by which We are carried to love Those Whom We have chiefly set our Hearts upon: Crosses and Disappointments in Things of that

that *tender Nature*, are very *affecting*, and often *overfet* the Mind.

Loss of Honour, Estate, Subsistence, is likewise very *afflicting* to some Persons; to Those especially who have long supported their Credit, and have made a handsome Figure in the World, having at the same Time, fair and promising Hopes that They should ever do so. When such Persons, unexpectedly fall to Decay, the Calamity fits hard upon Them; and the more *honest* and *ingenuous* They have all along been, so much the *sorer* is the Affliction; because They have a *quick Sense* of Shame, and are most tenderly affected with the Thought, that They can no longer look up, and appear like their Neighbours.

As to Men of profligate Lives, I do not perceive, that They are half so much affected, though They come to be stripped of all. They are more hardened in their Tempers, and are not very sensible of Shame; besides that They might have expected it beforehand, having really deserved it: And so it is no Wonder if sometimes a condemned Felon is not much afflicted with his Confinement in a Dungeon; or if He goes with less Concern in his Looks even to Execution, than many an honest Man discovers upon some Family-Losses, or upon the Decay of his Credit in the World.

These *smaller Calamities* to an *ingenuous Mind* are more *affecting*, than the *greatest* can be to *hard, stupid, and incorrigible* Wretches: And the Reason, as I before hinted, is, because the *Passions* of Those are *more tender*, and the Mind more susceptible of Impression. Hence arises sometimes deep Melancholy in such Persons. Their Minds become dejected and sunk, their Spirit wounded and broken with Losses, Crosses, and Disappointments. The like sometimes happens when Men have set out into the World with fair Hopes and Expectations, have been flattered with Golden Promises, and been long dependant upon Persons in Power, and at last defeated and sent away empty. The Regret and Indignation which such Treatment is apt to raise, may be enough to overpower the Succours of the Mind, and to break their Spirit beyond Recovery.—These Instances may suffice for Illustration of the first Particular, the Head of *outward Calamities*.

2. A second Cause of breaking a Man's Spirits, I must not omit to mention (though I question whether it be very common) which is, the Sense of some grievous Sins lying hard upon the Conscience. It is very certain that the *greatest Calamity* that can be, is an *ill-spent Life*; and the Remembrance

brance of it, if seriously laid to Heart, may well break the Spirit, and overwhelm the strongest Mind. But it rarely happens that any Man falls into deep Melancholy on any such Account. Much the greatest Number of the most profligate Sinners die hard and impenitent, and go out of the World without any Signs of true godly Sorrow, or Remorse at all. And if some discover a Kind of relenting Sorrow, yet it is so slight and superficial, and They think so well of their State, and so flatter Themselves with the Hopes of Mercy, that there is infinitely more Danger of their dying in a fond Presumption, than of their dying in the Depth of Despair. The Truth is, Men are very hardly brought to have any feeling Sense of a *World to come*, like to what They have of *This*; and so They are the *less* in Danger of being affected with their *Sins*, or the Consequence of them, to a Degree of Melancholy or Despondency. Yet some Examples there have been of *religious Despair*: And I suppose JUDAS was one; who being struck with the Sense of his cursed Treachery, sunk under its Weight; and being wounded and sore broken in his Spirit, went and hanged Himself in Grief and Despair. There have been some few dreadful Instances of like Nature besides, enough to justify the reckoning a *guilty Conscience* as one among the many other Causes of a *wounded Spirit*.

I am sensible, that there is such a Thing as *religious Melancholy*, and the Case is not very uncommon. But I take *That* to be quite another Thing from what I have been speaking of, and falling properly under quite a different Head, which I now proceed to speak of, in the third Place; namely,

3. Bodily Indisposition, which is frequently the *sole Cause* of a broken, dejected Mind. By this I do not mean, that Men fall into Melancholy, as being troubled for the ill State of Health They are under: But as the Soul and the Body *sympathize*, any Disorder of the Nerves, Blood, or Spirits, will naturally affect and discompose the Mind; and it is in this Sense that a *wounded Spirit* may be sometimes owing to an ill Habit of Body, in like Manner as *Lunacy* also may, of which this may be a Degree.

Religious Melancholy, generally speaking, seems to be Nothing else but a *disordered Imagination*, owing to some *ill Disposition of the Blood*, or some *Distemper in the Nerves*, or in the *Brain* the Center of them. The *fine Spirits*, which are the *Instruments* the Soul makes Use of to *think* by, move *irregularly*, and raise odd *fantastical Ideas*, like as they do in *Dreams*:

Dreams. Hence come very odd Conceits, and perhaps profane and even blasphemous Thoughts in Persons otherwise very piously disposed; and Who at the same Time abhor those Thoughts, and are deeply concerned on that very Account. Here seems to be Nothing in all This, but a *bodily Indisposition*, which is indeed a *Misfortune*, but no *Fault* of the Person suffering under it.

There may indeed have been a Fault sometimes in a Person's Conduct, to occasion such an ill Disposition of Body; as, if it hath been brought on by hard Drinking, or indulging some foolish Passion more than was meet: But yet the Effect might arise from *other Causes*, wherein the Person had not been accessory to it at all. It might be the Remains of a Fever, or other bodily Distemper, which the Patient had been afflicted with; or it might have been owing to several other *natural Causes*, too tedious for me to mention, and which it more concerns a *Physician* to enquire into, than it does a *Divine*. I mention this Case however for two Reasons. *One*, for the Satisfaction of *scrupulous Consciences*; that if any Persons find Themselves so affected, they should not be *cast down* on that Account, nor suspect that They are guilty of a Crime in what They cannot help: And the *Other* Reason of my taking Notice of the Case is, that We may *pass the more charitable Judgment* upon any unhappy Persons who have been *afflicted in this Way*. But to proceed.

Besides *religious Melancholy*, there are also several other Kinds, which often arise from some bodily Indisposition, which may be presumed to have the greatest Hand in Them, in such particular Constitutions. For when Misfortunes or Disappointments, though slight and trivial (and None are without some) fall in with a Temper or Disposition inclined to Melancholy, They have a much greater Force upon Them than they would otherwise have; and the Effect produced is really owing partly to the *outward Calamity*, and partly to the *inward Disorder*; it is the Result of *Both* together, *Both* contributing, as it were, their *Share* towards it. In such Cases it is not always easy to say *which* is the *principal Cause*, or which the *subordinate*: For in compounded Powers of that Kind, it may be difficult to compute their respective Forces, or to determine exactly *which* is the *more prevailing*. But I have said enough of the *Causes* which lead to Dejection of Mind, which break or wound the Spirit of a Man within Him.

III.

I now pass on, *Thirdly*, to prescribe some proper *Remedies* or *Preservatives* against it.

It is worth the Pains, to keep up our Spirits, and to maintain the Vigour of our Minds, in all Cases, if We can. For it is a lamentable Thing to be overfet with Trouble, or to be overwhelmed with Grief and Despair. It makes Life miserable as Life can be for the Time, and then brings Men down to the Grave. When the Mind is sunk, the Spirit wounded, or, as We vulgarly say, the Heart broken, Life does not hold on much longer; or if it does, it is a *Burthen*, and a weary Load, worse than Death. There is no Remedy for it, when the Malady seizes Us in any deep Degree: For when the Mind itself is seized, a Man has no longer any Command over his own Thoughts; there is no Room left for Advice or Instruction; no Handle for Reason and Counsel to take hold of. This makes me speak rather of *Preservatives* than *Remedies*; supposing the Text to mean by a *wounded Spirit*, a Spirit quite broken: But if it may be understood of the *Approaches* only, or the intermediate Degrees, short of *Extremities*; there may then be some *Remedies*, the same which I also call *Preservatives*, and am now going to lay down. It must be owned, that natural Courage, inborn Strength of Mind, is One of the best *Preservatives*, or strongest Securities against it: But as *That* is a Blessing of Nature, and I am only to speak of what may be acquired, I shall pass *That* over as foreign to this Head. My Business will be to lay down Rules either for *preserving* that natural Courage where it is, or for *acquiring* an artificial Courage (if I may so call it) which may answer or more than answer the Other.

1. And here undoubtedly the first and principal Rule must be, to trust in God, and to live a Life conformable to the Doctrine of CHRIST. There is no Prescription so infallible, no Cordial so comfortable, as This now mentioned. *Come unto Me*, says our Blessed Lord, *all Ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest*: There is Nothing so fortifies the Mind, or so invigorates the Spirit, as Faith and Trust in God, joined with a good Life; that We may be able to say with ST. PAUL, *Herein do We exercise ourselves, to have always a Conscience void of Offence, towards God, and towards Man*. This Consideration taken together with the comfortable Hope and Expectation of Joys eternal in a Life to come; I say, these

these two, taken together, are sufficient to warm the coldest Heart, and to give Courage and Bravery to every drooping Spirit. The Strength of these Principles has been tried and proved; and it appeared most to Advantage in the early Ages of the Church, when Persons of the most tender Age, or timorous Sex, would run to a Stake, or to a Rack, without discovering the least Uneasiness in Look or Gesture; and never fainted in Heart, nor became broken in Spirit, for any Trouble or Terror that Wit and Malice combined could expose Them to. Now, if a Principle of Religion was thus effectual in the very hardest Circumstances which human Life could fall under, why might not the same Principle be of like Force in the ordinary and common Casualties incident to Mortality? If therefore You are desirous to keep up your Spirits, and never to sink under a Misfortune; fortify your Minds by *Faith*, and by a serious and constant Endeavour to *please God*. This will inspire Courage when nothing else will, or when the World itself fails: It will do it at all Times, and under all Circumstances, even upon the Bed of Sickness, or at the Hour of Death; provided only, that You have then your Thoughts awake, and that the bodily Indisposition does not disorder the Freedom of the Soul.

2. Next to a thorough Sense of Religion, I shall mention a second *Preservative*, nearly allied to it, and rather a Branch or Part of it, than distinct from it; which is, to sit as loose as possible to this World; to wean and disentangle our Affections from temporal Things: For, since it is impossible not to meet with infinite Crosses and Disappointments here, if We set our Hearts on this World; the surest Way is, not to expect or desire any great Happiness here, but to become more and more indifferent to all worldly Enjoyments. If We can be content with a moderate Share of temporal Prosperity, We shall be the less concerned at Disappointments, and, of Consequence, the better prepared to meet Afflictions, and to bear up under them. These two first Rules which I have mentioned, both meet together in one Rule of St. PAUL's, *Set your Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth*†. As to other inferior Rules for preserving Chearfulness and Vivacity of Spirit, such as agreeable Company, good Books, Employment in an honest Calling, innocent Diversions, and the like; as they are None of them comparable to what I have before named, it may be sufficient barely to have hinted them. I have not mentioned the *drinking* away Cares, as some call it, among the *proper Expedients*; because

because indeed it is highly *improper*, and tends to enfeeble both the Body and the Mind, by vitiating the Blood, wasting the Spirits, and disordering the Nerves: Not to mention, that it is expensive and vain, and is an Offence against God; and so, in all Views, is more likely to wound and break the Spirit, than to fortify or strengthen it. Seek not therefore to any of those vain and deceitful Expedients, which will by no Means answer: But rely upon the true and solid ones before intimated; such as *Faith*, a *good Life*, and a *good Conscience* consequent thereupon, together with fixed and constant *Meditations* upon the Joys of a Life to come: If Ye do these Things, Ye can never fail.



S E R M O N XIII.

The true Nature of Charity; its Value, Measures, and Proportions stated, from the Gospel Account of the *poor Widow's Offering*.

A Charity Sermon.

MARK XII. 43, 44.

*And He called unto Him his Disciples, and saith unto Them, Verily I say unto You, that this poor Widow hath cast more in, than all They which have cast into the Treasury:
For all They did cast in of their Abundance: But She of her Want did cast in All that She had, even all her Living.*

THE Story of the poor Widow, who threw in her two Mites as an Offering to God's Temple, and was applauded for it by our Blessed Lord, is related by two of the Evangelists, St. MARK and St. LUKE; and it is a Thing so well known, that the *Widow's Mite* is noted even to a Proverb. It was at the Time of the *Passover*, the Fourth and last Passover our Lord was at, that He was present at the Temple, in one of its Courts, called the *Court of the People*, and in that Apartment of it which belonged to the Women, and for that Reason called, the *Court of the Women*. Here it was that the Chest, or the Alms-Box stood; and hither the People brought their Offerings, either for the Use of the Temple, or for the Relief of the Poor: And here it was that the poor Widow made her humble Offering of two Mites, to the Value of a Farthing, while richer Persons gave very considerable Sums. *Many that were rich, cast in much*, but it was out of their Abundance, and what They could very well spare:
While

While She threw in a very small Gratiuity, but it was what She even wanted to subsist upon; for it was *all that She had*, even all her Living. Our Blessed Lord, standing by, and well knowing her hard Circumstances (as He knew all Things) was pleased to observe thereupon, much to the Honour of the poor Widow, that She had really shewn Herself more bountiful and generous than Any of the Rest: For She had given more, in Proportion to her Circumstances, than Any One else had done: For They had contributed only what They had to *spare*, and but a *Part* even of *That*: Whereas She had generously quitted what She could not so well spare, wanting it for Herself; and not a Part only of *That*, but *all*; not a *single* Mite, which was half her Substance; but *Both*, which was *all* She had.

By this Account of the poor Widow, We may reasonably judge, that She was One who lived by her Labour, or by the kind Assistance of Friends. She had no Estate, no certain Fund to subsist upon, no Money beforehand above the Value of a single Farthing; which was barely sufficient for one Day's Sustenance; and *That* She gave away in *Charity*. This so memorable Act of her's, and which our Lord Himself has been pleased to set so high a Value upon, will deserve our close Inspection, and most attentive Consideration. It will be of excellent Use, for shewing wherein the true *Nature* and *Value* of Charity consists; as also for pointing out to Us the proper Rules whereby to fix its *Measures*, and settle its Proportions. My Design then is,

- I. To make some *general Observations* upon the Instance now before Us, for the clearer understanding the *Duty of Charity*, or *Alms-giving*. And.
- II. To apply those *general Rules* or Remarks to the *particular Purposes* of the present Occasion.

I.

First, I propose to make some *general Observations* upon the Instance now before Us, for the clearer Understanding of the *Duty of Charity*, or *Alms-giving*.

I have before hinted, that it may be in some Measure doubtful whether the *Widow's Quota* was given for the Service of the Temple, or for the Relief of the Poor: But which soever it was, the Difference is not material. It was a *religious Offering* to God, as is plainly intimated by St. LUKE,

LUKE, Chap. xxi. Ver. 4. And whether it was intended for the Use of the Temple of JERUSALEM (which was God's House) or for the Use of the Poor, who, in another Sense, are God's Temple likewise, it comes to the same Thing. But This I observe by the Way only, and proceed now to what I intend.

1. One of the first and most obvious Remarks upon the Case now in Hand, is, that the *real Value* of any *charitable Gift* is to be estimated, not by the *Quantity*, or the *Price* of the Thing given, but by the *Affection of the Mind*, and *Generosity of Heart* that is seen in it. The *Widow's Mites* added but *little* to the Treasury, and were but of *small Account* in the Poor's Box: But notwithstanding That, They were of *great Esteem* in God's Sight, and *more acceptable* to Him than the *largest* and *richest Presents*. He saw under what Circumstances the poor *Widow* was, what Difficulties She was pressed with, how hard She laboured, and with what *Warmth of Zeal*, *Ardency of Affection*, and *Strength of Faith*, She had made her Offering. These were the Things which recommended it to God's Acceptance; and made it more valuable in his Eyes than much larger Contributions, where there was not the *same Temper of Mind*: And This indeed was most highly just and equitable; For We may observe,

2. Secondly, that there may be more of *real Charity*, and *true Generosity* in a poor Man's offering a *Mite*, than in a rich Man's contributing a *Talent*; and That upon several Accounts. A rich Man gives, in such a Case, *no more* than He can spare, nor indeed quite so much: the poor Man gives *more* than He can well spare, or (like the *Widow*) leaves Himself Nothing. One spends out of his *Superfluities*, the Other parts with his *Necessaries*. It is very easy to observe, that there is much more of hard Struggle, much more of Self-denial, and consequently much more of true Charity and Generosity, in *One Case*, than in the *Other*.

3. From hence then, Thirdly, I remark, that the Generosity, or Liberality, of any Person, in his charitable Contributions, is to be measured chiefly by the *Proportion* it bears to his *Circumstances*, justly considered. He who gives most in *Proportion*, and not He who gives *absolutely* the most, is the most charitable and generous Man. And the principal Thing to be considered in such Cases is, what every Man has to spare, upon a fair Computation, and a just balancing of his Accounts: After comparing his present Incomes with his present necessary Expences, his future Provisions likewise with his future Occasions; then what is the Overplus, to
 expend

expend in Charities? This, I say, is the material Question: what can a Man conveniently spare? He that gives more than He can spare, in some cases, is not prudent, or perhaps not just to his Creditors: Tho' if He does it in such a Way as to pinch Himself only, abridging Himself in some Measure, to relieve Others, it may be an excellent Instance of Generosity and Charity; as seems indeed to have been the Case of the poor *Widow* in the Text. She parted with all she had, and *That all was no more than the value of one Day's Sustenance.* Perhaps she had just so much beforehand and no more; or she denied Herself for one Day, and trusted to God's Providence, and to the Labour of her Hands, for the Morrow. This she could do, and it was the utmost she could do, and the most generous Person living could not have done more. She had a willing Mind, which carried her through, and made her strive to her Power, yea and beyond her Power; that is, beyond what she could well spare: And though the Gift was Small, the Generosity of it was Great; and as such it was accepted according to what she had, and not according to what she had not.

4. From hence I must observe, Fourthly, and particularly Notice should be taken of it, that even the Poor and Low are not totally excus'd from the Duty of *Misgiving*: For if God accepted the *Widow's* Mite, Who is there so poor from whom He will not accept it? And if He accepts of such small Offerings, nay, and applauds them too as the most valuable Charities, no doubt but He expects them also, yea, and strictly requires them.

We are us'd indeed to address Our Selves chiefly to the Rich, when We are raising Contributions, because They are the Men most able to assist in such Cases: And I know not whether Many of the inferior Sort may not have taken up a false Notion, that They have no Concern in, Nothing to do with Things of that Kind: And perhaps the Negligence of Collectors, or even the Silence of Preachers may have contributed too much towards the leading Them into That Persuasion. But a Mistake it is, and a dangerous one too. Rich and Poor are all equally concerned in the Duty, but in Proportion to their Circumstances: And He that has little is as strictly bound to give something, however small, out of that little, as He that has more is obliged to give more. It is excellently well said in the Book of TOBIT: *If Thou hast Abundance, give Alms accordingly: if Thou have but little, be not afraid to give according to that little: For Thou layest up a good Treasure for thy Self against*

against the Day of Necessity. The Reason and Foundation of the whole Thing lies here: The principal End and Design of Almsgiving looks, not so much at the Relief of the Indigent (whom God could have provided for a thousand other Ways) as at the training Men up to mutual Love, Charity and Friendliness, to qualify Them for Heaven. It is upon this Account chiefly, that God has appointed and ordered the Distinctions of Rich and Poor; and has so contrived, that We have the Poor always with Us, and when We will We may do Them good. And as the *Rich* are obliged to relieve the *Poor*, so even the *Poor* also, in proportion to their Circumstances, are bound to help *One Another*. It is not only their *Duty*, but their *Privilege*; and if They understand it rightly, They will look upon it *as such*. What an Advantage and an Honour was it to the poor *Widow*, that she, by bringing her *Mite* only into the Treasury, could therein exercise a nobler Charity than the Greatest of All there had done; and should at length gain the Prize of Liberality from Them All, God Himself being Judge of it!

Let no Man therefore think Himself *too poor* to be *charitable*, upon pressing Exigencies, or upon some solemn Occasions. Why should not the Poor, as well as Rich, have the Privilege of doing what They can do, to inure their Minds to the Practice of Virtue, and to fit Themselves for Heaven? Have They but little to give? *Charity* does not consist in *much* or in *little*, but in doing the *best* We can, and doing it with a *willing Mind*. The single Instance of the poor *Widow* is enough to shew, that even a *Beggar*, in Proportion, may be as *generous* as a *Prince*; and that sometimes the *smallest Present* imaginable may be the *greatest Bounty*: And if, by the Smallness of it, it proves but of little Service to the *Receiver*, Whoever He be; yet it will be of inestimable Use and Benefit to the *Giver*, which is most to be considered in all Acts of Charity. And if, while the Rich and Affluent, contribute somewhat out of their Superfluities, a *Day-labourer*, suppose, contributes a *Day's Work*, or the Value of an *ordinary Meal*, denying Himself for it in the mean while; such a *Charity* as This will *weigh more* than *large Sums* from *Others*, and will be *in the Sight of God of great Price*.

5. But having sufficiently considered the Case of the *inferior Sort*, I come now, in the fifth Place, to observe what concerns the Rich and Wealthy.

The Use which They are to make of the Instance of the Text, is, to be charitable and generous according to their Circumstances;

Circumstances; and in so much *greater Proportion* than Others, as They are *more able* to do it.

It may be asked then, How shall They, if inclined to it, contrive to come up to the Generosity of the poor *Widow* in the Text? what; must They strip Themselves of all They have, and reserve Nothing to subsist on, as she did? No, by no Means. Different Circumstances require different Management; And there is a Way of coming up to the poor *Widow's* Attainments, without doing exactly as she did. If a rich Man were to give away his whole Estate, and reduce Himself to Poverty, or to hard Labour; This would not only be doing *as much*, but a *great deal more* than the poor *Widow* did: For she did not make any such great Change in her Circumstances, nor did she sink her State or Condition at all lower than before. Her Example therefore, or our Lord's applauding it, is of no Force as to obliging any one to throw Himself out of that Rank, Station, or Condition of Life wherein God has placed Him. If He has been born to an Estate, or by honest Industry has acquired one, let Him live and enjoy it. But further: neither does the Instance of the Text oblige a Man, when in a thriving Way, to dispose of all the Overplus, all the clear Gains, at the Year's End; For how then could He go on to support that Rank and Station He is in, and to provide for his Family? The poor *Widow* might, by what she did, straiten Herself for a Day or two, and after That be in as good a Condition as she was before: But were any trading, or thriving Men to give away all their Increase, They would soon find their Affairs run backwards, and would not be able to recover them. Well then, how must We state the Case with a rich Man, to make it answer to This in the Text? The *Rule of Proportion*, I conceive, is *This*; that the *Richer Sort*, in order to *give the more* away in Charity, should be content to practise some Degree of *Self-denial*, in like Manner as the poor *Widow* did. Let them retrench unnecessary Expences at least, abridge their Pleasures, shorten their Diversions, cut off as much as possible from the Pomp and Pride of Life, to spend upon the Poor. Besides This, let them not be over solicitous as to Futurities, providing handsomely (as They will call it) for their Children, or raising their Families. The poor *Widow* trusted God for her own necessary Subsistence, rather than make no Offering at all to the Treasury. And thus much at least may be expected of every Man; that He contribute according to his *present Circumstances*; and that no Anxiety, either for Himself or his Children after him, ever hinder Him from

doing in *Proportion* to what He at present enjoys. Be content with a moderate Provision, rather than grow covetous, and defraud the Poor: For, after all, God's Providence is the best Security, and his Friendship the richest Treasure, We can have.

As to the *Proportion* to be observed in charitable Contributions, no one certain Rule has been, or can be set, which shall indifferently suit with *all* Circumstances. Should We say a tenth, or a twentieth, or a thirtieth Part of every One's Increase, *That* might be too much for *some* Persons to give, and too little for *Others*, as their Circumstances might widely differ. The *Proportion* therefore, or Quota, must be left to every Man's *private Judgment*, and *Conscience*, upon a careful Consideration of his ordinary Expences and Incomes, and the Occasions He may have to provide for. One Thing is certain, that God demands of Us *some Part* of our Substance, in *Proportion* to what He has blessed Us with; and He expects that it should be paid to the Poor, on his Account; not sparingly, nor grudgingly, but liberally and generously; for He loveth a cheerful Giver. The two great Obstacles to Acts of Charity are the two Extremes of *Prodigality* on one Hand, and *Covetousness* on the other. The Prodigal who wastes his Substance, has nothing left to lay out in Charity; and the Miser who sets his Heart upon Wealth, or is greedy of Gain, has no Inclination to Acts of Beneficence. Both are in Extremes, and Both are very much to blame. The middle Way is the best; so to be *frugal*, as not to be *covetous*; and so to be *generous*, as not to be *lavish*. Frugal We must be, if We mean to be charitable: For if We know not how to save Money, where We decently and properly may; We shall have little to spare either for Charity, or any Thing else. The growing Folly of these Times is Luxury and Extravagance; Many affecting to live above their Circumstances, and to vie with their Superiors. This is not the Way to do Good with what We have, or to be instrumental in relieving and supporting the Poor. Know the *Value* of Money, without valuing it *too much*: And learn first how to *save*, if You would have wherewith to *spend*. But I have said enough of the general Rules and Measures to be observed in the Duty. I proceed now briefly,

II.

To apply the Whole to the present Occasion. The Objects now before Us are the Charity-Children. No Question

at all can be made as to the Usefulness of this Charity, or of our Obligations to support and encourage it as far as lies in our Power. There are all the Reasons to be pleaded for it, as for any other Poor: And besides those, there are many other very considerable Arguments to be urged, which are peculiar to this, beyond other Charities. I shall not enter into a Detail of them: They have been often repeated, and are abundantly known, and understood. All I need do, is, to endeavour to stir You up to bear a Part in this excellent Charity, from such Considerations as the Instance of the Text may naturally suggest to Us.

From this Instance of the poor Widow, High and Low, Rich and Poor, in Proportion to their Circumstances, are concerned to bring in their charitable Contributions.

1. As to the *inferior Sort*, I cannot too often repeat, that it is both their *Duty* and *Privilege* to contribute with Others: For it is not so much for the Sake of the *Receivers* that God demands this Service of Us, as for the Sake of the *Contributors*. It is to give Them an Opportunity of doing a Thing acceptable to Him, whereby to purchase to Themselves an everlasting Reward. The *poor Man's Penny*, is, in this Case, as valuable an Offering, as the *rich Man's Pound*; while it carries in it as much Love to God, and as hearty and fervent a Zeal for the blessed Work which We are engaged in. Whoever rightly considers it, will be ambitious to bear a Share in this *Labour of Love*, that He may also put in his Claim to the Reward it brings with it. And since This does not at all depend upon our having plentiful Fortunes (for a little out of a little, is as great a Charity as the greatest) He must be very unwise, Who, because of his low Circumstances; excuses Himself from bearing a Part in this Duty, and thereby forfeits his Claim and Title to the Rewards of it.

2. As to the *richer Sort*, I have the less Need to say any Thing, because no One can make a Question of Their Obligations to contribute largely, and liberally. They enjoy what They have; by this very Tenure, and upon these Conditions, that they pay to Almighty God their Pension and Tribute out of it. And it is a Favour and Blessing of Almighty God towards Them, that He has been pleased to appoint Them his *Stewards* and *Almoners*, to distribute his Bounties among the *Poor* charged upon Them. The Design is, to give Them an Opportunity of being kind, as God is kind, and of being merciful, as He is merciful. And the End and Aim of that is, that being hereby improved, and

perfected, and becoming like unto God in good Works, They may at length have the Honour of being admitted into his Presence, and be meet Partakers of Eternal Glory!

And now, to draw to a Conclusion, give Me Leave only to add, that, if there was a Time when it concerned Us to be more than ordinary zealous for our Schools of Charity, it is now. Numbers are falling off from the Faith of CHRIST; and meanly, as well as impiously, apostatizing from their most Holy Religion: And This They do, for the Sake of their Lusts, and, like DEMAS in the Apostolical Times, *having loved this present World*. The greater Care should be taken to promote the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion amongst Us: And no Care is so effectual, or so well answers the Purpose, as the training up Children in the Fear of God. If We cannot altogether reform the *present* Generation, provide at least that the *next* may be *better*, or may not proceed from *bad* to *worse*. There is none so likely a Method of doing it, as the encouraging these Charity-Schools, which (God be thanked) are now become *numerous*, and are spread over the three Kingdoms. Let every Man, according to his Abilities, give a helping Hand for their Support. It is a slight and small Thing, in Comparison, only to throw in our Quota of Money towards it, when many both of Clergy and Laity (who have large Hearts, and generous Minds) do not only lay out their Substance, but their Time also, and Labours, and their hourly Thoughts and Cares upon it. May God give a Blessing to their pious Endeavours, and stir up Others also to follow their bright Examples; that so Religion may yet thrive and flourish amongst Us, and We may be daily improving in *every good Word and Work*.

S E R M O N XIV.

Shame and Contempt the End of Pride.

PROV. XVI. 18.

Pride goeth before Destruction; and an haughty Spirit before a Fall.

THE Observation is trite and common, and such as might have been made without the Wisdom of SOLOMON. But though the Thought be *obvious*, it is *important* too, and can never be too often inculcated; so that for its Use and Value, it was well becoming his Wisdom to take Notice of it, and to minute it down, as a proper Caution and Warning to be transmitted, upon the Authority of his great Name, to latest Posterity. It adds some Weight and Dignity to the Thing, that it was observed so long ago, and by the Wisest of Men, conducted also in what He wrote by the *Holy Spirit* of God. The Proposition here asserted is of the *Moral Kind*, and is one of those which may be said to be *commonly*, and for the most part, true, though not *universally*. The *Exceptions*, if there be any, are yet few and rare, and shake not the Credit of the *general Remark*. The Thing is generally true, true, as we say, even to a *Proverb*, that *Pride goeth before Destruction, and an haughty Spirit before a Fall*. Which is the same as to say, that *Pride* and *Haughtiness* commonly bring Men to *Destruction* and *Shame*; They lead to it, and They end in it. In discoursing upon this Subject, it may be proper,

- I. To shew what *Pride* and *Haughtiness* mean; that so it may be distinctly perceived what it is that we are treating upon.

II. I shall endeavour to illustrate the Truth of the Observation from Scripture and Reason. And,

III. I shall briefly apply the Whole, by suitable Reflections.

I.

I begin with shewing what *Pride* and *Haughtiness* mean. The Names are common, but the Ideas often not very distinct; from whence arise Confusion of Thought, and Mistakes sometimes in judging both of Our Selves and other Persons. *Pride* is a Word of great Latitude, and ought to be set clear; as the Thing meant by it should be also carefully distinguished by its several Kinds. In the general, *Pride* is *thinking more highly of Our Selves than We ought to think*. It is a Corruption of *Self-Love*, and is, in its Root and Principle, Nothing else but *Self-Flattery*. There is a sensible Pleasure in conceiving that We stand possessed of any considerable Advantages, either of Mind, or Body, or of outward Circumstances. The higher We can raise the Idea of Our Selves, the greater is the inward Pleasure. Here lies the Bait and the Temptation to *Pride*, that is, to a Man's *thinking too highly of Himself*, instead of *thinking justly and according to Truth*.

And now, if Any One desires to know when, or wherein, He may be said to *think too highly of Himself*, it is either when He thinks that *any Thing He has, is his own*; or when He conceives Himself to *have* what He really *has not*; or when He sets *too great a Value* upon what He *has*, and challenges to Himself *more Respect* than is *due to Him* upon that Score.

If a Man supposes any Advantage He has to be strictly *his own*, He is therein forgetful of God, from Whom He received it, and to Whom He owes every Thing. This is properly *Pride towards God*: For as to *Men*, They consider This but little, as being little concerned in it. They allow a Man to call what He has, *his own*, as a Man's *Estate* is *his own*: By which, however, in Strictness is only meant, that it is *his own*, in *Opposition* to any Claims from *other Men*, not in *Opposition* to God.

The Second Article I mentioned was, a Man's conceiving Himself to *have* what He really *has not*: As when He judges Himself to be *wiser, richer, greater, better* than He is. This is *Pride*, and is so clear a Case, that it needs no farther explaining.

The

The *Third Article* I mentioned was, the setting too great a Value upon what He has, and upon Himself for it, challenging to Himself more Respect than is due to Him upon that Score. This is *Pride*, and very troublesome *Pride* too, because now it is reduced to *Act*, appears outwardly, and causes great Disturbances; as all disputable Claims must of Course do. There is one very common Weakness, one Species of *Pride*, belonging to this Head, which deserves to be here taken Notice of; and that is, a Man's valuing on Advantage above many greater, only because it is his, to draw Respect and Honour into such a Channel, where He is the surest to have a Share: As if a rich Man despises all who are not rich, though They may have What is more valuable; or if a Learned Man despises All who are not learned, though perhaps wiser than Himself; or if One, learned in one particular Way, despises All who are inferior to Him in that Respect, though perhaps in other and greater Respects, They may be much his Superiors: This is *Pride* and *Vanity*; and the like may be said of any other Kind of Men overvaluing their real Advantages, whatever They be.

Now the Advantages which Men have, are reducible all to three Kinds: Advantages of *Mind*, or of *Body*, or of outward Circumstances. To the *Mind* belong Understanding and Virtue, which if a Man be proud of, it commonly goes under the Name of Conceitedness, or *Vanity*. To the *Body* belong Strength and Beauty, which if Any One be proud of, I do not know whether it has any other Name besides the general Name of *Pride*. To outward Circumstances belong Riches, Honours, Birth, Quality, Station, Office, and the like. As to Riches, the vulgar Name for that Sort of *Pride* is, *Pride of Life*: For the rest, *Haughtiness* is the proper Name to express it by, the Name used in my Text. There are some other Names, or Sorts of *Pride*, as it appears outwardly in Conversation, or in Conduct.—Assuming too much to one's self, either by Words or by Actions, is a Species of *Pride*, and is called *Arrogance*, or *Insistence*. As also a stubborn refusing to pay Respect where Respect is due, goes under the same Names. Affecting to appear above what belongs to one's Station, Character, and Circumstances, and therein vying with our Superiors, is *Pride*, but is mostly called *Ambition*, or *Vanity*.

From what hath been said, it may appear, that *Pride* is not peculiar to Persons of any Rank, but is common to Men of all Ranks, Orders, and Degrees. There is as much *Pride* shewn in denying Respect where it is due, as in demanding it where it is not due: And there may be as much *Pride* covered under

der a *Thread-bare Garment*, as under the *richest Embroidery*. The *Pride* and *Stomach* of the *inferior Sort*, discovers itself, in *Stubbornness*, *Captiousness*, *Querulousness*, *Rudeness* towards their *Superiors*, and *Disobedience* to their *just Commands*.— Having now said What I think sufficient, of the *Nature* and *Kinds* of *Pride*, and *Haughtiness*, I proceed

II.

To illustrate the Truth of the Observation of the Text, that *Pride* and *Haughtiness* will generally have a *Fall*, will end in *Shame* and *Contempt*. This may be shewn two Ways: Either from the *Reason* of the Thing it Self, and its *natural Tendency*; or from the *vindictive Justice* of *Almighty God*, taken with what He has declared in *Holy Scripture*.

I. First We may argue the Point from the *Reason* of the Thing it Self, and its *natural Tendency*.

Some Kinds of *Pride* are very *expensive*, and so lead to *Beggary* and *Shame* of Course: As when Men affect to make a *Figure* above their *Rank*, and beyond their *Circumstances*: The *Pride* of *Equipage* and *Furniture*, of *Dress* and *Attire*, and all that *vain Pomp* and *Luxury* which goes under the name of *Pride* of *Life*; and really is so, when used by Those whom it belongs not to, and who are not able to maintain it. This commonly ends, as naturally it must, in *Beggary* and *Ruin*. It is but a ridiculous Part a Man acts all the Time, Who affects to vie with his *Betters*, and to move out of his *proper Sphere*, assuming a foreign Character: He is but despised and ridiculed for the *Vanity* of it by discerning Judges all along: But in Conclusion, *Shame* and *Disgrace* come pouring in upon Him in full Measure, when *Poverty* cometh as One that travelleth, and his *Want* as an armed Man||. Such is the usual Fate of one Kind of *Pride*, the *Pride* of *high-living* and *Luxury*, where the *Circumstances* do not answer.

There is Another Consideration, which concerns all Kinds of *Pride*. It is very well known that *Pride* is a very contentious, and disobliging Quality. No Body loves, or really respects, a proud Man: All Mankind naturally hate, and slight such a Person. He loses *Friends* every Day, and procures *Enemies* more and more, by his disobliging and insolent Behaviour. And if ever a Time comes when He may stand in Need of Those Whom He had despised, or may lie at the Mercy of Others Whom He had provoked (as there are often sudden and unexpected Turns of Affairs) then, wanting *Friends*,
and

and having many Enemies, his Destruction comes upon Him like a Tempest; and He is no longer able to abide the Storm.

Another Thing which makes proud Persons most liable to fall, is, that being full of Themselves, and highly conceited of their own Sufficiency; They are exceeding confident, and of Course not so wary and cautious as other Men. Their Pride blinds Them; their Vanity runs them into Error and Mistakes. And yet This is not the worst of it, that They are liable to judge amiss (as humbler Men also, though in a less Degree, are) but when They are under any Mistake, They can scarcely ever recover it. For, as They see not the Thing Themselves, so neither will They suffer Others to undeceive Them. They shut the Door against Instruction, and will not accept either of Advice, or Warning. They are above being admonished, and too conceited to be advised. In the Multitude of Counsellors, there is safety, saith SOLOMON†; and He repeats it afterwards to make the deeper Impression. But what Safety can there be for a proud Man, Who generally thinks by Himself, and consults his own Humour, and Vanity? It will be Nothing strange, if such Persons, pursuing their own Folly, and not foreseeing the Danger, nor accepting of other Mens Eyes to discover it; I say, it will not be strange if They run blindly upon Ruin, and make haste to be undone. Thus far We may presume to judge of the Case before Us, from the common Course of the World, from the Nature and Tendency of the Thing.

2. But there is still greater Force in this Reasoning, if We consider, Secondly, that the Course of the World, and all Occurrences are in God's Hands, Who has particularly declared his Detestation of Pride, and his Resolution to punish it.

St. JAMES takes Notice that God resisteth the proud, while He giveth grace (that is, sheweth Favour) unto the Humble.† St. PETER repeats the same,§ and Both of Them take the Thought from SOLOMON.|| We read in this Chapter, from whence I take my Text, that Every One that is proud in Heart is an Abomination to the Lord.¶ And in the Chapter before, it is expressly said, that the Lord will destroy the House of the proud.* Among the six or seven Things, which the Lord more especially hates, a proud Look is one††; which implies a proud Heart. The whole Tenor of the Holy Scripture intimates how exceeding hateful Pride is to Almighty God. The Reasons for it are obvious. Pride is extremely improper, and unbecoming our Condition and Circumstances. Pride was not made

† Prov. xi. 14. xxiv. 6. ‡ Jam. iv. 6. § 1 Pet. v. 5. || Prov. iii. 34.

¶ Prov. xvi. 3. * Prov. xv. 25. †† Prov. vi. 17.

made for Man (says a wise and grave Writer) *nor furious Anger for Them that are born of a Woman.*† *Why is Earth and Ashes proud?*‡ *Pride is not a single Vice, but a complicated Wickedness, big with great Injustice towards God and towards Man, a grievous Insult upon Both. It robs God of his due Honour, and breaks in upon the common Liberties and Privileges of Mankind, only to bring in stolen Incense, and ravished Glories to it Self. Pride is an Inlet to all Vices; as it is breaking off from God, and making a separate Interest independent of Him: And it is a Bar to all Goodness; in as much as the first Step to Goodness is Humility. What aggravates all the rest is, that Pride is scarce ever to be reclaimed. It owns no Faults, It knows none: It is blind in it Self, and obstructs every Passage where Light should enter, from abroad: So that Hardness and Impenitence commonly go along with Pride; and the Proud are, of All Men, the last to be reformed: the very Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before Them.*§ These Things considered, we need not wonder if Pride be most odious in the Sight of God, and if He every where testifies his just Resentment against it.

If We look into *Scripture-History*, We shall find terrible Examples of God's avenging Justice upon proud and haughty Men: As upon CORAH, DATHAN and ABIRAM, and their Confederates;|| upon SENNACHERIB the proud Assyrian;¶ and upon prouder HAMAN*. We shall scarce read of a City destroyed, or a Kingdom demolished, but *Pride* is mentioned as One of the principal Sins that brought down the heavy Judgment upon Them. The *Pride* of *Israel*, and the *Pride* of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, led on their Ruin. And even the pagan Kings and States, as *MOAB*, and *AMMON*, *Tyre* and *Sidon*, the *Edomites* and *Philistines*, the *Egyptians*, *Assyrians*, and at length the *Chaldeans*; When They grew proud and insolent, God sent his sore Judgments upon Them, and destroyed Them utterly.

Seeing then, that Almighty God has thus frequently and terribly executed Judgments upon the Proud; We have the greater Reason to apprehend, that even in the common Course of his Providence, He will likewise testify his Displeasure against it. I have before observed, that, in the natural Tendency of Things, *Pride* commonly borders upon *Ruin*: But, if it be considered farther, that all second Causes are conducted by the Hand of God, and that all Occurrences of Life are under his Guidance and Direction; there may be Reason to believe,

† Ecclus. x. 18. ‡ Ecclus. x. 9. § Matth. xxi. 31. || Numb. xvi. ¶ 2 Kings xix. 2 Chron. xxxii. Hef. xxxvii. * Esth. vii.

believe, that, in some special Cases, God Himself may interpose his secret Providence, to baffle the stout Heart, and to bring down the High Looks, by a sudden Destruction.

Let This suffice for *Illustration of the Proposition* laid down in the Text.

III.

It remains now only to *apply* what hath been said, by suitable Reflections.

We may observe, how proper and well chosen a Consideration That of the Text is, for the dissuading Men from *Pride*, or the curing them of it: For what can be of greater Force than This, that *Pride* can never reach the End it aims at; that instead of *Respect*, it shall only meet with *Contempt*; instead of *Honour*, *Shame*; instead of *Greatness*, a *Downfall*? Could the *covetous Man* be once convinced, that no *Profit* were to be gained by *Covetousness*, He would never be covetous more; or, if the *Ambitious* were certain, that They could not arrive to *Preferments* and high Places by *Ambition*, They would be no more ambitious: But a *proud Man* may have *Demonstration*, that He shall never have the more *Honour* or *Respect* for his *Pride*; but quite the contrary: Why then should He be *proud*? It would be a Point of Wisdom in a *proud Man* (if ever *proud* and *wise* can go together) to conceal his *Pride*, and to put on the Face of *Humility*: For *Humility* is indeed the Way to get what the *proud Man* aims at; and the very *Appearance* of it would be of some Use, at least in the Sight of Men. Men gladly Honour the Person that merits it, and does not demand it: And They cheerfully pay *Respect* where it is taken modestly, and not exacted of them as a Tax, or a Tribute. Seek not Praise, thirst not after Glory, and You are sure to find it. Certainly, it must be a great Mortification to a *proud Man* to observe, (if He observes any thing) that the *Humble Man*, only by *modest Silence*, and *keeping his Place*, easily acquires all that *Respect*, *Honour*, and *Glory*, which a *proud Person*, with infinite Pains, and sharp Contentions, had been long labouring after, and could never obtain. A *proud Man* considers not that *Respect*, *Reverence* and *Esteem*, are Things never to be snatch'd from Others, never to be extorted: They must come freely, if they come at all: Force is a Contradiction to their Nature, and they lose their very Name and *Essence*, as soon as exacted. There may be *Fear*, there may be *Aws* and *Dread*, or servile *Flattery* extorted of Another; but *real Respect*, *Esteem*, or Honour

Honour never come *that Way*. Humility and Modesty beget Reverence, and real Esteem; being Tokens of real Worth: Besides that God's Providence often interposes to promote the Humble: *Before Honour is Humility*, says SOLOMON†; and a greater than He has said, that *He that shall Humble Himself shall be exalted‡*.

But it may be asked perhaps, What is This *Humility*, so much commended in Scripture? Is it for a Man to make Himself *cheap* and *common*? Is it to *submit* and give Way to *Every One*? Is it to *stoop below ones Place, Station and Character*? No, by no Means. *Humility* is no *levelling Principle*, no Enemy to any Distinctions of Age, Rank, Place, or Dignity. A Man need not forget his *Station*, or his *Character*, to shew his *Humility*. A Man may think *very humbly* of Himself, and yet *know his Place*, and act up to his *Station* and Dignity. St. PAUL was not *proud*, when He said of Himself (having a just Occasion for saying it) that He was *not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles§*: Nor when He insisted upon the Benefit of his Birth, and claimed his Privilege as a *Roman||*. This was thinking *highly* of Himself, but *justly* at the same Time; for He was deeply sensible at the same Time, from Whom He had received all, and therefore He humbly added, *though I be Nothing.** A modest Opinion of our Selves does not oblige Us to idolize Other Persons, or to submit below our Place, or Character. A Man should know as well What is due to *Himself*, as What is due to *Others*; and if He goes no farther than He *really knows*, but judges *strictly* according to *Truth*, and acts by *that Judgment*, without *Partiality*, He shews *no Pride* in such a *Conduct*; but approves Himself as a wise and an honest Man. If Inferiors expect *improper Condescensions* from their Governors, or take it amiss not to be received upon an equal Foot with Them; the *Pride* is in Them who *ask What They ought not*; and not in Those, Who, mindful of their *Place* and *Station*, support it with *Dignity*, and expect from their Inferiors a *becoming Respect*, and a *proper Distance*. There is therefore no *Pride* in *maintaining one's just Authority*, or *Character*: But when there is *Pride* among Persons of Fashion and Figure, it is seen chiefly in Their not condescending to hear the just Complaints of the Humble and Afflicted, Poor and Miserable; or, which is still worse, in their taking Advantage of their superior Station, to insult and tyrannize over Others, and to *oppress* their Inferiors. This is not *supporting Dignity*, but *lessening*

† Prov. xv. 33. xviii. 12. ‡ Matt. xxiii. 12. Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14.
§ 2 Cor. xi. 5. xii. 11. || Acts xxii. 25. * 2 Cor. xii. 11.

lessening it; and is disparaging and disgracing both *Themselves*, and their Station. The true Character of Greatness is, to afford Protection and Relief to the Innocent, Humble, and Distressed; and to exert all the Strength and Force of their Authority, in crushing the Sturdy and Insolent, and All Such as endeavour to make a Prey of the Weak, or a Spoil of the Honest and Well-deserving.

I have now done with the Objection proposed; and I have been the larger in answering it, that the true Notion of *Humility*, or of *Pride*, may be the more clearly understood. This indeed is the most material Point. All Mankind condemn *Pride*, but They do not always know distinctly, *what it means*. I have endeavoured to describe it in as plain Characters as I could, for our Information: Not to teach Any One to find it in his Neighbour (for That is no Token of *Humility*; the *Proudest* Men generally complaining most of *Pride* in *Others*, because their *own* can least bear it) But to examine the more carefully into *our own Selves*; and That, in Order to discover, whether any Thing of this poisonous Vice be yet lurking in Us; and if We find it so, to use all proper Means to purge it out. May We all seriously endeavour to do thus, for the satisfying our own Consciences, and the saving our Souls.



SERMON

S E R M O N XV.

The Wisdom of true Simplicity of Mind, and Integrity of Manners.

JOHN I. 47.

JESUS saw NATHANAEEL coming to Him, and saith of Him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no Guile.

THE Apostle BARTHOLOMEW is, by good Interpreters, supposed to have been this very NATHANAEEL, of Whom our Lord here speaks in such high Terms of Commendation. NATHANAEEL might be the Name which He commonly went under before his Conversion to CHRIST, and BARTHOLOMEW might be the Christian Title, which he assumed afterwards.

The memorable Character, here given of Him, is, that He was an *Israelite indeed*, or true *Israelite*, in Whom was no *Guile*: He was a Person of great Simplicity and Integrity; remarkable for his honest and upright Heart, his frank and open Conversation, and for his Plainness and Sincerity in all his Dealings: He had no sinister or selfish Views, no Deceit nor Craftiness in Him: His Designs were all just, fair, and honourable; his Conduct equal, clear, and uniform: In a Word, his Tongue, his Hand, and his Heart, all went together.

Such was his general Character; and, by the particular Notice which our Blessed Lord was pleased to take of it, We may perceive that He looked upon it as somewhat *rare* and *uncommon*, above the ordinary Pitch of Human Virtue. In discoursing farther, my Design is,

I. To enquire, how it comes to pass, that Guile and Insincerity are so apt to prevail amongst Men.

II. To set forth the *Wisdom* of true *Simplicity of Mind*, and *Integrity of Manners*; both with Respect to the World that now is, and That which is to come.

I.

As to the first Particular; if We look back to the Original of *Guile*, and search to the Bottom of it, We shall find it chiefly owing to that *natural Selfishness* which is, in a Manner, born in Us, and bred up with Us; and which Nothing can ever thoroughly correct, or cure, but a deep and due Sense of God and Religion. Men naturally feel their *own* Cravings and Uneasinesses; but They feel not, in like Manner, the Cravings and Uneasinesses of *other* Persons: And therefore They are naturally prompted to indulge *Themselves* as far as They can, though it be at the Expence of their *Neighbours*, who have the like Inclinations and Aversions with Them. A little Time and Experience sufficiently convinces every Man, that there is no forcing All around Him to yield to his single Will, or Humour; but He is certain to meet with strong Resistance and Opposition on every Side, as often as He directly attempts any Thing of that Sort. Hence arises a Kind of *Moral Necessity* of making Use of Management and Address, in Order to compass That by *Wile* and *Artifice*, which cannot be obtained by open *Violence*. Here lies the *Foundation* of Guile, Treachery, and Deceit. They are the natural Result of an overweening Self-Love, meeting with Opposition from *without*, and not yet restrained by true and right Principles from *within*.

It is one chief Aim of the Laws of every well-governed Society, or Community, to bridle, in some Measure, the *Exorbitances* of *Selfishness*; that it may not break out to that *Degree*, as totally to destroy or disturb the *public Harmony*: But, notwithstanding all the *outward legal* Restraints that can be enacted, there is still Room enough left for Guile and Treachery to range in. Human Laws may be eluded, or perverted; and the Men of Guile may often manage so artfully, as to turn the very Laws *Themselves*, which were made for the Protection of Innocency, to the Oppression or Destruction of it: So that the Laws of any State are by no Means an effectual *Remedy* against *Guile*.

Besides the Laws of the Land, there is a Kind of *Law of Reputation*, which generally is a much stricter and closer Restraint upon deceitful Practices, than the Other. Many are afraid of being detected and exposed, if They should deal unhand somely by their Neighbours: And so the tender

Regard which They bear towards their own Reputation, restrains Them from several iniquitous Practices, which They might otherwise safely venture upon, within the Laws of the Land. In such Cases, where the common Courts of Judicature can take no Cognizance, the *Tribunal of Fame*, however, often strikes Men with Awe; for Reputation is a tender Point, and a Man's Livelihood often depends upon his fair and good Character: But, though This may be an additional Restraint upon Guile, and of considerable Force; yet it goes not deep enough to effect any *Change of Heart*; neither does it sufficiently obviate the more refined and exquisite Contrivances of human Subtily. Some will lay their insidious Schemes with such Closeness and Secrecy, that it may be next to impossible to detect Them; or however to convict Them by any clear and certain Evidences. Others, taking Advantage of their Superiority of Fortune or Station, will boldly carry on their deceitful Practices; while Those who see Them, and suffer by Them, are afraid to complain, or so much as to appear sensible of the Hardships They lie under, for Fear of *suffering worse*. Others, lastly, who, through the Strength of Habit and long Custom in the Arts of Guile, are once got beyond the Sense of Shame, may securely go on in the same Track, and even boast of Fraud and Circumvention, when discovered; nay, and perhaps may find Means to turn the Ridicule or Disgrace upon the unhappy Sufferers. From hence therefore We may perceive, that the *Law of Reputation* is no certain, no universal *Security* against the *Practice of Guile*.

Neither indeed can any Thing be justly looked upon as a *sovereign Preservative*, which shall effectually answer in every Respect, excepting only an awful *Fear* and *Dread* of the *Divine Majesty*, a lively and vigorous Expectation of a Judgment to come. This *Religious Principle* is the only *certain* and *constant Security* against *Guile*: And this will prevail to all Intent and Purposes, wheresoever it fixes firm Root. A Man, truly pious and conscientious, will consider that Guile is not more odious in the Esteem of Men, than it is abominable in the Sight of God, and must be one Day accounted for before the high and awful Tribunal. While He reflects hereupon, and at the same Time loves his own Soul, He will be sensible that it is not only his *Duty*, but his real and lasting *Interest*, to act always a just, and equal, and generous Part with all Mankind. He will see good Reason for loving his Neighbour in like Manner as He loves Himself; and so of Course will be inclined to deal with Others, as He desires

to be dealt with. He will be true and faithful in all Measures, whether transacted in Secret, or in the Face of the Sun. He will take no unfair Advantages of the *Weakness* of One, or of the *Ignorance* of Another, or of the *Necessities* of a Third, or of any other unhappy Circumstances or Contingencies. He will be equal and impartial in all his Dealings, though it were towards an *Idiot*, or an *Infant*, or other thoughtless, helpless Person; as well as towards the sharpest, and threwedest, and greatest, whose *Capacities* or *Resentments* He may stand in Awe of: And That, because He considers Almighty God as infinitely more discerning and more powerful than All; and that it is to Him We must give Account of our Dealings with our Fellow-Creatures. No Artifices, no Colourings can be of any Avail in God's Sight; for God is not mocked: He sees into the inmost Recesses of the Mind, and searches even the Reins and the Heart. This Consideration strikes at the very Root of all *Guile* and Treachery, when Nothing else will.

However, from hence may be perceived, how it comes to pass, that *Guile* prevails so widely amongst Men: It is, because This World is *present*, and *sensible*; while the Other is *distant*, and mostly out of Sight. There are Few, in Comparison, who retain a lively, constant, prevailing Sense of God, and a World to come: And therefore there are but Few such *Israelites* as NATHANAEL was, a *Man in whom was no Guile*. Good-Nature and common Humanity will sometimes go a great Way: And if to Both be added a certain Frankness and Nobleness of Temper, together with a Sense of Honour, and a quick Perception of Shame; all these in Conjunction will almost be sufficient to make up a *Man without Guile*. But yet, unless a deep and due *Sense of Religion* be super-added to all, the Character will not be complete; neither will the Man's other Principles be effectual to restrain Him from the more refined Sort of *Guile*, whenever He has any great Advantages to make by it. Trust not too far to any Man's natural Honesty, or Probity, if He appears not, in his general Conduct, to have the *Fear of God* before his Eyes: For, He that is *false to his God*, will be *false to all the World*, as often as any present engaging *Interest* persuades to it, or any strong *Temptation* comes in his Way.

I take Leave to add, that *Guile* may be often found even under great *Appearances of Religion*; either because Men may be Hypocrites, or because their very Religion may be of the corrupt Kind, adulterated with wrong Principles; or because, at the best, it amounts only to a faint and feeble Principle of

Life, lodging more in the *Head*, than in the *Heart*. From whence again We may infer, that the Character of the Text is the more rare and uncommon, since None but the *Religious* can ever fully come up to it; and not *All They*, but Those *only* who have the Honour and the Happiness to be deeply tinctured with *Piety*, and who constantly make it the *ruling Principle* of their *Hearts* and *Lives*.

Having thus largely accounted for the prevailing Growth and Influence of Guile and Insincerity, I proceed now *Secondly*,

II.

To set forth the *Wisdom* and *Excellence* of *sincere* and *up-right Conduct*, both with Respect to the World that now is, and to That which is to come.

1. No doubt but many and great worldly Advantages may ordinarily be obtained by the Practice of Guile: Otherwise, there would be no Temptation to it, or none great enough to draw such Numbers into it. On the other Hand, it must be acknowledged likewise, that there are ordinarily many and great worldly Advantages arising from honest and sincere Conduct; so that, upon the Whole, it may justly be questioned, whether the Men of *Guile* are generally the *greatest Gainers*, even with Respect to this *present Life*. It is true, We may sometimes observe immense Riches gathered by dishonest or treacherous Practices; and it is certain, that crafty Deceivers do sometimes raise their own Fortunes upon the Ruins of much better Men: But such Instances may perhaps be justly looked upon as a few glittering Prizes among a Multitude of Blanks: For it is certain, on the other Hand, that great Numbers are daily undone by dishonest Courses; while their indirect Practices first blow up their Credit, and soon after sink the Men. I believe it will be generally allowed, as to Matters of Trade and Commerce, that *Honesty* is, for the most Part, the *truest Policy*, the surest Way to thrive. One that is known to make a Conscience of telling the Truth, who is remarkably faithful in all his Dealings, who is exact and punctual in his Contracts or Covenants, who is content with moderate and reasonable Gains, and who scorns to take any indirect or mean Advantages; I say, such a Person as I have here described, will, generally speaking, find Favour amongst all Men; and, by the Strength of his Friendships, and God's Blessing upon them, will be able to bear Himself up in the World: Whereas, when once a Person

Person begins to be marked as a dishonest, or designing Man, Few will chuse to have Dealings with Him; Few will contribute to support or countenance Him. In the general therefore, and in the ordinary Course of Affairs, a *plain honest* Man appears to stand upon a *surer* Foot, than a *Master of Guile*; and is much more like to thrive and prosper in the World.

Another considerable Advantage which He has, lies in the Ease, and Peace, and Tranquillity of his Mind. He has no laboured Schemes to lay, no perplexing Difficulties to torment him, no Contradictions in Conduct to reconcile; but his Way is plain, easy, and clear before Him. He can meet his Acquaintance with a free and open Countenance, with a pleasing and chearful Aspect. As his Conduct is all fair and clean, and He is conscious of it, He is under no Pain or Uneasiness about future Discoveries, or After-Reckonings, nor about any the most prying or even malicious Enquiries. Search his Conduct to the utmost, and the better will it appear: His Righteousness, upon the Scrutiny, will in the last Issue be made as clear as the Light, and his just Dealing as the Noon-Day.

Such is the Security and Comfort of the upright Man (generally speaking) and there is no other Pleasure of Life comparable to it. This I take to be almost universally true, with Respect to that Kind of Honesty of which I am now speaking, such as concerns Matters of *Property*, or belongs to Trade and Commerce. But withal I must own, and it may not be improper here to observe, that there is another Kind of Honesty which often lies under Hardships, and does not ordinarily meet with such favourable Acceptance in the World. I mean the Honesty of resisting importunate Solicitations to something ill, and preserving a Conscience clear of all *undue Compliances*. There are few Persons of a general Acquaintance, or of any large Scene of Business, who may not frequently upon Occasion find, that some designing Man or other (having *sinister Ends* to serve, for which they want *Instruments*) may importune Them vehemently to do *wrong Things*. If an honest Man declines and hangs back in such Cases (as in Duty He is bound to do) He is certain to get Ill-Will for the Time, and both to lose Friends, and to raise to Himself Enemies. Most of Us have either Relations, or Benefactors, or Allies, or Companions to please, who may severally in their Turns request *improper Favours*; and at the same Time may be so *partial* to their *own Schemes*, or Interests, as not to bear a Repulse with any *Candour* or *Patience*.

When Party-Differences happen to run high, such Difficulties will occur very frequently; and they often prove *severe Trials* upon honest and upright Men, Who have no Guile of their own; and Who cannot, with a safe Conscience, consent to be made *Instruments* to the *Guile* of *Others*, or to be Partakers of other Mens Sins. If They are persecuted, or maligned for their Non-Compliance in such Cases (as commonly happens) They must be content to bear it as becomes Christians. Virtue would be no Virtue, or very slight, if it met with no *Trials*, to exercise, improve, and perfect it. In such Instances chiefly is the Proof made, whether We are *really religious*, or are only *Men-pleasers*; whether We value the solid and lasting Praise of God, or the vain and transient Caresses of Men. Honesty, in this View, may sometimes (perhaps often) *fail* of its *due Reward* here; but it is certain to have it in *full Measure* hereafter.

2. Therefore, secondly, the *Wisdom* and *Excellency* of a sincere and upright Conduct, with Respect to a Life to come, is very plain and indisputable. It is securing the main Chance, and laying up for Eternity. *Providing Things honest in the Sight of all Men* (whether Men observe it; or not) will infallibly recommend a Man to God, who sees it, and marks it, and will finally reward it. The securing this great Point is *true Wisdom*, as it is pitching upon the noblest and *best End*, and pursuing it by *fair* and *just Means*. An honest and good Heart is the Top-Perfection of Man, and is, in the Sight of God, of the greatest Price. With Persons so qualified, God chuses to abide here; and Such shall also eternally abide with Him hereafter. There will be no Guile or Hypocrisy in the Regions of the Blessed. Those ill-natured Qualities are calculated only for the low Interests of this Life (and not for them always) but will have no Place in the other. All Things are naked and open to God now, and will be also both to Men and Angels hereafter. There is nothing hid, but what shall then be revealed; nor any Thing kept secret, but what shall then be made known: For, God will make manifest the Counsels of the Heart. How mean, how despicable will all deceitful Contrivances, and all ungenerous Practices appear at that Day; when every Mask of Dissimulation shall be thrown off, and every studied Refinement of Guile and Malice disclosed, and Nothing but sincere and undisguised Honesty will be found able to *stand the Test*. Then will be seen what complicated Folly there always is in every the most artful Contrivance of Guile; and what a Depth of Wisdom and good Sense there constantly is in plain and sincere Dealing.

I do not say, that the *Innocency* of the *Dove* may not be frequently found, where the *Wisdom* of the *Serpent* may be wanting. An honest *Heart*, and a discerning *Head*, do not always go together: There may be perfect *Sincerity* (humanly speaking) where there is not perfect *Wisdom*. But this I may presume to think and say, that the first and best Part of *Wisdom* always goes along with sincere and upright *Conduct*. There is a *wise Choice* made of the noblest and *best End*, and due *Provision* laid for the *main Thing*, which, in effect, is *every Thing*.

We may observe, in our Blessed Lord, a bright Example of the most perfect *Innocency*, joined with consummate *Wisdom*. No Guile was found in his Mouth, or in his Life; no Slip, no Failure in Point of Discretion, through his whole Conduct. Numberless Traps and Snares were laid for Him, to entangle Him in his Talk, or to over-reach Him in Business: But He had *Wisdom* sufficient to defeat them all, and even to turn the insidious Craftiness of his Adversaries upon their own Heads. This He was able to do; for He was *God*, as well as *Man*. He is a finished Pattern for his Disciples to copy after in some Measure, though never to come up to. Their Integrity, after all, must come vastly short of His; and so must Their *Wisdom* also: For We can neither resemble the *Dove*, nor the *Serpent*, to any such Degree of *Perfection*, as He did. Nevertheless, We ought to use our best Endeavours to attain to such *Perfection* as We may, in Both Respects. Or, however We may be found wanting in Point of *Wisdom*, or *Capacity* (which is no Crime to fail in) let Us labour to be as exact as possible, in Point of *Sincerity*, which is more in our own Power. In Order thereunto, give me Leave, by Way of Application of what hath been said,

III.

To subjoin a few plain and brief Directions, for our Improvement in so admirable a Quality.

1. Let no One ever persuade You, that the Practice of Guile and Circumvention is any Argument of superior Parts, or Understanding. It is the easiest Thing in the World, to be deceitful and disingenuous. Children are capable of it, soon after They can speak: And They will daily improve in it, by mere *Instinct* of *Nature*, if not seasonably restrained by wholesome *Discipline*, or wise Instruction. Persons of very low Capacities are often capable of a great deal of low Cun-

ning, when They are scarce found capable of any Thing besides. And though sometimes, Men of very bright Parts, may be observed (under strong Attachments to this World) to take into the Ways of Guile; yet it must be owned to be a great Disparagement to their Parts, that They do so: And had They Sense, or Consideration sufficient to look forwards to the End of Things, and to lay all Circumstances together well and wisely, They would abhor that very Guile, which now perhaps They are proud of. Honestly and Wisdom are but Words of the same Import in Holy Scripture, and mean the same Thing; because, in Reality, there is no *true Wisdom*, but in *true Integrity*.

2. Let No One ever be offended or chagrined, if He should any Time observe, that some particular Persons thrive and prosper by Fraud, Guile, or Treachery. Such Instances are rare in Comparison, as I before hinted: And for One that grows considerable in such a Way, Hundreds perhaps fail and sink in their Circumstances by these very Means. Besides, what Enjoyment have those Few thriving Deceivers in their ill-gotten Advantages? Little, very probably; or none. But suppose the very best We can imagine in their Favour; yet Scripture more than once assures Us, that in the last Issue, even the *Prosperity of Fools destroys Them*. Were They to gain the whole World by unrighteous Practices, it would profit Them Nothing; since in the last Result, They are certain to lose their own Souls, and to perish utterly.

3. Let not the Sense of any perplexing Straits or Difficulties, ever move You to go out of the plain Road of Duty, for the Sake of any present Relief. Those are Temptations which SATAN throws in our Way, and by which He leads the Unthinking into the crooked Paths of Guile and Dishonesty. Perhaps, by some convenient Use of Fraud, some seasonable Treachery, a Man may rid Himself at once of some pressing Difficulties: But then, let it be considered on the other Hand, that This is only serving a *present Exigency*, to lay in for *future Troubles*, and future Repentance; and is *losing* more in the *general*, than can be *gained* in the *particular* Instance. Let a Man be content, in such Cases, to venture no farther for the extricating Himself out of Difficulties, than He honestly and justly may; leaving the rest to God, Who often relieves good Men in the *greatest Extremities*, and works their Deliverance in *marvellous* Ways, such as They could neither foresee, nor so much as imagine.

4thly and lastly, If any inviting Opportunities should offer (as sometimes happens) that by once or twice straining a Point,

Point, and breaking through the unerring Rules of Christian Sincerity, you might make some very considerable Advantage, to set You, as it were, up in the World ever after; reject the alluring Bait at once, with the utmost Horror and Disdain. Consider, not so much what may flatter your present Desires, in Point of Interest or worldly Honour, as what is strictly *just, honest, and fair*, and will bring you solid and lasting *Felicity*. Consider not *Consequences* in a *secular Account*, when *strict Duty* is concerned. Leave the Issue of all in God's Hands; only, do You what is *right*, and what it becomes You to do. To take into any indirect, unjustifiable Courses, is to throw Your Self at once out of God's Favour and Protection, and is renouncing all reasonable Claim to his Blessings here, or hereafter. Remember the pious and prudent Resolution of Holy JOB: *Till I die (says He) I will not remove my Integrity from Me;—My Heart shall not reproach Me, so long as I live.* § This noble Resolution He held to, as his *Sheet-Anchor*, to his dying Day: In This was He happy even amidst his Troubles (much more when they were over;) and by adhering to this Principle, He is now a Blessed Saint above; as well as our NATHANAEL, of Whom our Blessed Lord hath given such an excellent Character.

Learn We from such admirable Examples, to be true and faithful in all that We say, and in all that We do; deceiving no Man, beguiling no Man to his Detriment; punctual to our Word and Promise, much more to our Oaths; firm and constant to our just Engagements; honest and impartial in all our Dealings; every Way behaving, as becometh Men professing Godliness, *Israelites indeed, in Whom is no Guile.*

§ Job xxvii. 5, 6.

SERMON

S E R M O N X V I.

The Joy in Heaven over One repenting Sinner,
more than over Ninety and nine Just Men,
explained.

LUKE XV. 7.

I say unto You, that likewise Joy shall be in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just Persons which need no Repentance.

THESE Words of our Blessed Lord are introduced with a noted Parable of the *lost Sheep*: A Parable recorded in the xviiiith Chapter of St. MATTHEW, as delivered by our Lord upon a special Occasion; but recorded by St. LUKE as again delivered, and reinforced by our Lord, upon an Occasion more general, as shall be shewn presently.

The Parable is to this Effect. A Person is supposed to have had an *hundred Sheep* of his own, and all of them safe, except *one*, which had happened to wander from the Flock, *lost* for the Time. The Owner, in this Case, being much concerned for the Loss of a *single Sheep*, goes immediately in Quest of it, leaving the *ninety-nine* for a while to themselves, till He finds the Sheep that went *astray*, to bring to them. Having found it, He returns with Joy: Yea, He *rejoices more over that Sheep*, in that particular Case, *than* He does over the *ninety and nine* which *went not astray*. He *cometh home*, He *calleth together his Friends and Neighbours*, saying *unto Them*; *rejoice with Me, for I have found my Sheep which was lost.*† Our Blessed Lord, having thus opened the Parable, proceeds next to apply it, in this grave and weighty Moral. *I say unto You, that likewise Joy shall be in Heaven over one Sinner that*

† Luke xv. 6.

that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just Persons which need no Repentance.

To inforce this Doctrine, He adds two Parables more, containing the same Thought, in the main, or illustrating the same Thing, and serving the same Purpose. One is, of a Woman having ten Pieces of Silver, but losing one of them for a Time, and seeking diligently till She finds it: Upon Her so finding it, She rejoiceth over that Piece which She had lost, more than over the nine other Pieces which She had constantly enjoyed.

The third Parable is of a Father recovering his Prodigal, his lost Son, Who had long gone from Him, and was, in a Manner, lost and undone. The good Man, in this Case, is more sensibly affected at the Recovery of that lost Son, and makes greater Rejoicings for it, than He had ever done for his other Son, Who had never offended in like Kind, nor ever gone from Him.

These three Parables are all drawn from Nature, and are founded in self-evident Facts: But the *Justness of the Application* of them to the *Case mentioned in the Text*, may not perhaps be obvious at first Hearing, but may want some Explanation. I shall therefore endeavour so to explain the Particulars, as to render both the *Design* and the *Use* of our Lord's *Doctrine*, in this Instance, clear and perspicuous to an attentive Hearer.

I.

The *Design* of all is to be learned chiefly from the *Occasion* given for those three Parables.

The first *Occasion* given for the first of the Three, appears in St. MATTHEW, Chap. the xviiiith. Our Lord, perceiving that there was too much of *Selfishness*, or Narrowness of Spirit, in his own Disciples, while Every One was contending for the first Place in Heaven, little concerned how Few might come thither, provided They *Themselves* were but secure of the Divine Favour; I say, our Lord, perceiving this Meanness of Temper to prevail too much amongst Them, endeavoured to correct it, by representing to Them, that They ought to look upon Others as *Parcels of Themselves*; and to rejoice as much at the Recovery of any lost Brother, as at the Recovering a lost Limb of their own, or any lost Part of their own Substance or Treasure: For, that such was the tender Compassion of Almighty God, the common Father of All, that He would

would have *None of his little Ones perish*.* And such also was the benign and generous Temper of the Blessed *Angels* in Heaven, that They *rejoice exceedingly*, as often as any *new Converts* come in to Them, to share with Them in Glory. Such is the Purport of the Parable of the *lost Sheep*, as first delivered by our Lord, and recorded in St. MATTHEW's Gospel.

Upon another Occasion, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were disposed to murmur at our Lord for *receiving Sinners*, and *eating with Them*†. Here the like *Selfishness* and *Narrowness* of Spirit (which our Lord had before reprov'd in his own Disciples) brake out in a much greater Degree, and attended with more malignant Symptoms. Wherefore our Blessed Lord did not only repeat the Parable of the *lost Sheep*, but He pressed it in a stronger Manner than before; illustrating and enforcing it every Way, and super-adding two Parables more, of like Purport with it.

The chief Design of all was, to insinuate to those murmuring, repining, envious *Jews*, Who conceived themselves *righteous*, and Who were for *ingrossing Heaven*, in a Manner, to *Themselves*, that such Temper of Theirs was altogether wild, unnatural, and inhuman: That, however They might scorn and reprobate *Sinners*, They ought to remember that even *Sinners* were their *near Allies*; and, if They were gone from Them, were worth the *recovering*: And that, instead of *envying* Them the Benefit and Privilege of *returning* to the Fold, They ought rather to take all imaginable Pains to *reduce* Them; and to *rejoice exceedingly* in it, as in the *recovering* any *lost Treasure*: For, the admitting of repenting *Sinners* to a Share with Them in Happiness, would really be no *Detriment* to Them, but so much entire *Gains*: And, if They had but any Thing of a Godlike Temper and Disposition, or any just Notion of the Case, They would be sensible that so it must be. A Man rejoices at the recovering his *lost Sheep*: Why? Because He looked upon *That Sheep* as *Part* of his own *Substance*. A Woman rejoices at the finding the *lost Piece* of Silver: Why? Because She had made it a *Part* of her beloved *Treasure*. A kind Father rejoices at the fetching home his *lost Son*: Why? Because He loved Him as a *Son*, and could not but be glad of so agreeable an *Addition* to his Family. How then could the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* murmur and repine at our Lord's *receiving Sinners*, in Order to *reclaim* Them; or, why should They desire to *engross* the *Divine Favours* entirely to *Themselves*? The Reason was, that

* Matth. xviii. 14.

† Luke xv. 2.

that They were *selfish*, and ill-natured, and had nothing of a large Soul, or a Divine Spirit in Them: For, if They had but looked upon Sinners with an Eye of *Love*, or *Tenderness*, They must have rejoiced in their Happiness, as being Part of their own. The *Angels* in Heaven understand this Matter rightly; and They are so far from *repining* when Others come in for a *Share* with Them, that They rejoice at it; and so much the more, if the Case was before *doubtful*, or almost *desperate*.——There is Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just Persons which need no Repentance.

But here it may be asked, *Who*, or *What* are those *ninety-nine just Persons*, needing no Repentance? And again, be They Who They will, why more Joy for the recovering of *One*, than for the keeping or retaining of *Many*? These are seeming Difficulties, which may arise upon the Case. I shall endeavour briefly to account for Both.

1. As to the *just Persons*, Who are said to need no Repentance, We may best understand such Persons as lead good Lives in the main; and Who have no Need to change their general Course of Life, but to persevere in it, and to carry it on to higher Perfection. In a certain Sense, the very Best of Men may be said to need Repentance, that is, *daily Repentance*, for Sins of Infirmity, Sins of daily Incurſion: But, as the Word Repentance often means a thorough Change of Heart and Life, not from good to better, but from bad to good; in that Sense there may be Many Who need no Repentance, having long been in a good State, in a State of Grace and Salvation. With Respect to *Such*, our Lord elsewhere says; *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners, to Repentance* § Our Lord came not to call *Such* to a different Course of Life, or to a thorough Change of State; but to improve that Course which They were before in, and to make it, by his Merits and Satisfaction, accepted to Salvation. Of such religious and exemplary Men, We may reasonably interpret What our Lord says in the Text, that They need no Repentance.

2. But a more difficult Question still remains, namely, why our Lord should say, that there shall be more Joy in Heaven over any one repenting Sinner, than over ninety-nine just Persons, such as I have described. As to Which, We may be confident, that our Lord had no Design to put any Slight upon Men who constantly lead a regular Life; nor to prefer a returning Penitent, before a Person Who has held an uninterrupted Course of Virtue and Piety. The Parables which He

He was pleased to make Use of for this very Case, are alone sufficient to shew, that He could have no *such* Meaning, nor any Intention to inculcate so foreign a Thought. The Man who had lost *one Sheep* out of the *hundred*, did not value that *lost Sheep* above the *ninety-nine* left; no, nor above any *single Sheep* of the whole Number, so far as appears; to be sure, He would not have parted with any *one* of the Whole, for the recovering of *what was lost*; because That would have been doing Nothing, but endeavouring to repair *one Loss* by another; and indeed by a *greater*, all Things considered.

So again, in the Case of the *Woman* represented as having lost *one* of her *ten Pieces* of Silver; her searching so diligently for what She had lost, was no Argument of her valuing that *single Piece* above all the rest, or above any other Piece that remained with Her. She would have taken the *same Pains* to recover any other of the *Ten*, had She had the Misfortune to lose it; so that her *Care* and *Sollicitude* in that Affair, could be an Argument of Nothing, but of her valuing all alike. Neither would She have parted with any *single Piece* which remained sure, in order to regain That Piece which She had lost.

Once more: The *Father*, in the Parable, Who shewed Himself overjoyed at the Recovery of the *Prodigal Son* before lost, cannot reasonably be supposed to have valued Him more, or so much as He really valued his *Jobber Son*, who had remained constantly with Him: Neither would He have parted with that *good Son*, for the Sake of that *Other*; Who at the best was but a *reformed Offender*, though not to be despised in that View. To the One the Father said, *Son, Thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is Thine*. How kind and gracious! What could He have said more? As to the *Other*, He rejoiced in Him, as in a Son restored from the *Dead*, but not preferring Him to the Son Who had been all along alive and well. The Sum then is, that the very Turn and Structure of the three several Parables abundantly shew, that it was no Design of our Lord to prefer a late Penitent, before a Person of an even and uniform Life; much less to prefer One single such Penitent, before Numbers of the better Kind. The Parables themselves convey no such Thought: But it would be absurd to interpret a few particular Words of somewhat doubtful Meaning, against the plain and undoubted Drift or Tenor of the whole Discourse.

What then is it that our Lord can be supposed to mean by saying, that "Joy shall be in Heaven over *one* returning Sin-

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“*ner, more than over ninety and nine just Men?*” &c. The Meaning lies deep, but it may be drawn out, as I conceive, by attentively considering the *Occasion* of the Words, which I have before explained. Our Lord’s *Intent* was to correct an *envious, narrow, selfish Disposition* of Mind; such as leads Men to value a Blessing the *more*, for its being confined to *Them singly*, in Preference to Many Others; and to look upon any Privilege as the *less* for being *shared in common*. This is very ill-natured towards Men of our own Species, as if They were not our Brethren, and Members with Us: And it is greatly affronting the Goodness of God, as if it were not extensive, or diffusive enough to take in any Number whatever (fitly prepared) and to make the very *Largeness of the Number*, a considerable Circumstance for the *advancing the Felicity of Every Individual*. Now, in Order to confront and confute such envious and ill-natured Jealousies, our Lord was pleased to intimate, that the *Angels* of Heaven are of quite another *Temper* and Principle: For, though They are most highly in God’s Favour, yet They desire of all Things, for God’s Glory, and for Their own greater Happiness, to have *Men* brought in to *share with Them* in it. And, as They are *grieved* and concerned (so far as is consistent with their blissful State) when Men *revolt from God* to their own Undoing; so They are particularly *joyful* and thankful, as often as *Deserters return to their Duty*, and become capable of enjoying the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. If but *one* in a *hundred* should happen to *go astray*, and fall off (so our Lord puts the Case in the *first Parable*) They would think it of high Moment to *recover that One*; and *rejoice* in it, *more* than in the *other ninety-nine*: Because an *Hundred* is *more* than *Ninety-nine*, and a *new Addition* becomes Matter of *new Joy* to Them: Not, that *That single Person* is *better* than the *ninety-nine* (That were absurd) but, while *that single One* was *wanting*, the *Satisfaction* was *less*, and the *Joy* *impaired*; which, by the *Recovery* of the *lost Member*, becomes again full and complete. The narrow-spirited *Pharisees*, in their *selfish* Way, would have said, What signifies the Loss of *one Sinner*, or *more*, so long as *We* are but *happy*, and have *All to Our Selves*? For the *Fewer* We have to *share* with Us, the *more distinguished* are *We*, above the *Rest* of Mankind. So thought They, in their *Pride* and *Vanity*. But our Lord understood better; and He endeavoured to make Them understand it likewise, by the *three several Parables* which I have been explaining; which indeed were all intended to teach Us, not to think Our Selves the *more happy*, for being eminently distinguished

tinguished as a *select Few, exclusive of our Brethren*; but rather, then to judge *Our Selves most happy*, when the *greatest Numbers* can be persuaded to come in and *partake with Us*. Many are apt to please Themselves in a Thought, that They have Something to boast of *above Others*, which They retain to Themselves, and in which None can equal Them, or share with Them; as if *Happiness* consisted in *Singularity*, or *Superiority*: The Heavenly Temper is just the Reverse, and it is Brotherly Love that makes it so. True and dear *Friends* can scarce *relish any Happiness* in which *Both do not share*. Where *universal Benevolence* reigns, the Effect is as universal: The *Felicity of Every One* becomes the *greater for Every One's partaking* of it, and *sharing* in it. This, I presume, was our Lord's Thought in the Text, suitable to One that is a *Friend to All* Who will accept Him, and a constant Lover of Mankind.

Enough has been said, for the opening the *general Design* and Intention of the Text which I have been upon.

II.

It remains only to consider the more particular *Use* and Improvement of it; and That by Way of *Application* both to *good Christians*, and *bad*.

As to *good Christians*, They may from hence learn, how acceptable a Service They are performing, while They are endeavouring, either by Example or Persuasion, to draw many unto God. It is contributing to the Enlargement of God's Kingdom: It is afflicting and weakening the Powers of Darkness, and bringing fresh Matter of Joy and Triumph to the Blessed above. It is, at the same Time, putting on, and improving that heavenly Disposition here, which will be both their Perfection and Happiness hereafter. The *Angels* Themselves are employed constantly in these pious Cares; and it is both their Business and Delight to assist in converting Sinners, and to draw Them off from *Satan* unto God. Our Lord, in the Text, has intimated as much to Every good Christian, for the inciting Them to follow their bright Example; and He has further instructed Us to pray daily, that God's Will may be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. So much with Respect to Christians of the *better Sort*, Who have their Minds set towards Heaven.

As to the *Ungodly* and *Impenitent*, if disposed to hear and attend, They may learn a most comfortable *Lesson* from the Doctrine

Doctrine of the Text ; namely This, that though They are for the present, through their own Default, shut out from the Kingdom of Heaven ; yet a Door stands open for *Repentance*, whensoever They shall think it their Duty and Interest to look up to Heaven, and to return to God. For their further Encouragement, our Lord has been pleased to hint, that the *Angels* Themselves stand, in a Manner, waiting for *their Conversion* ; and will not only be content, but even *joyful* to receive Them, when They shake off their evil Habits, and become new Men, thoroughly reclaimed both in Heart and Life. In the mean Season They are considered as *lost* and undone, dead in Trespasses and Sins : And That is the very Reason given, why the Joy in Heaven will be the *greater* upon their *Recovery*, if ever They shall recover ; because it is *doubtful*, and almost *desperate*. Thy Brother *was dead* (says the kind Father in the Parable) *and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found*.† And therefore He judged it meet to make the *more solemn Rejoicing* for a *Recovery* of so *extraordinary* a Nature, somewhat resembling even a Resurrection from the Grave.

There are indeed many and great Difficulties in the Work of *correcting inveterate Habits* : But there are also many and great Encouragements, sufficient to countervail the Difficulties of it ; if a Man will but seriously set about it, with such Care and Earnestness, such Resolution and Endeavour, as any other Business of Weight requires. It should be resolved upon *instantly* without Delay, because *necessary* to be done, and *Delays are dangerous* : It should be pursued with *Resolution* and Vigour ; for *faint Endeavours* will never *effect any Thing* considerable, either in That, or any other grand Affair. It should be conducted with great *Deliberation* and Forecast, foreseeing every Obstacle or Impediment which may stand in the Way, and providing wisely against them. It is the Want of such *prudent Forecast*, which generally keeps Sinners in their *former Courses* ; and renders their *faint Resolutions* and Endeavours *fruitless* or *ineffectual*. They *sincerely wish*, perhaps, to *live better* ; and They *resolve sincerely*, at Seasons, so to do : But yet They *set not about the Work* in any *proper Method*, or with *due Precautions*. They *aim well*, with Respect to the *End* ; but They *use not the right Means*. They *aim to reform* ; but still They take no Care to *avoid such Temptations* as will be *too hard* for Them ; or to shun such Company and such Entanglements as will, probably, deceive and ensnare Them. And hence it is, that the r

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† Luke xv. 32.

warmest Desires after Godliness prove *ineffectual*; and their *best Resolutions* are not strong enough to secure Them against *frequent Relapses*. The only Way to *make sure of the End*, is to *look well to the Means*. Let but Any Person *consider well beforehand* What He has to do, and *how by Degrees it is to be effected*; and then *resolve* (with the Help of God's Grace) to *pursue those proper Measures*, with Care and Affiduity; and then He need not doubt but this Work of the Lord will more and more prosper in his Hands; and there will be Joy in Heaven over every such Thoughtful Sinner so repenting.





S E R M O N XVII.

Charity and kind Offices, the best Conquest over
an Enemy.

ROM. XII. 21.

Be not overcome of Evil; but overcome Evil with Good.

THE Advice is *short*, comprized in a few Words: But it is withall *full* and *instructive*, and carries a great deal of good Matter in it. It relates to our *Behaviour* towards our *Enemies*; shewing both what We ought *not* to do, in that Case, and what We *ought*. The Apostle's *Manner* of wording the Thing is observable; for there is a particular *Force* and *Beauty* in the very *Expression*. Being sensible, that the forgiving an Injury, or the not revenging it, is commonly looked upon as a Kind of *yielding*, and *submitting* to an Adversary (which is what the Pride of human Nature is most averse to) He prudently anticipates the Thought, and gives it quite another Turn; handsomely insinuating, that all *Desire* of *Revenge* is *yielding* and submitting to an Enemy; is as much as confessing, that He has disturbed, pained, and disconcerted Us to that Degree; that We are no longer able to command our Temper, and to be really *Masters* of our *Selves*. Overflowing with Rage and Resentment, upon such Occasions, is betraying a *Littleness* of Mind, and proclaiming our own Defeat. It is as good as declaring, that the Enemy has got within Us, has thrown Us off our Guard, and put Us into Disorder and Confusion. Whereas, if a Man can *stand the Shock* unmoved, and be *above* being concerned at it, He undoubtedly shews a more *manly Spirit*, and true *Greatness* of Mind. He is then seen to be *Master* over his *Passions*, and above being disturbed by little Things: And there is None so

generous a Way of conquering an Enemy, as the letting Him see, that the Worst He can do, shall not so much as ruffle Him, or put Him out of Humour. *Be not overcome of Evil; but overcome Evil with Good.*

The Text then consists of *two Parts*, or *Precepts*; the One *negative*, and the Other *positive*: Of which I shall treat in their Order.

I.

The *negative Part*, or *Precept*, comes *first*: *Be not overcome of Evil.* Suffer not any Affront, or Injury, to get the better of You, to afflict, and conquer You. More distinctly; suffer it not to get the better of your *Reason*, your *Piety*, or your *Charity*: For if it does so, You are really vanquished and worsted by it.

1. I say, let not any Affront, or Injury, have the Superiority over your *Reason*, considering Your Self now only as a *Man*, without taking in the additional Consideration of your being a *Christian* also.

Reason is designed for the *governing Part* of Man, which is to regulate and command the Passions. While Reason holds the Reins, and keeps its Seat of Government, all is right and regular, and a Man is *Master of Himself*: But if the Passions get the *upper Hand*, and domineer over Reason, the Person, for the Time, is, as it were, quite *unman'd*, and is driven on to any the most extravagant Freaks and Follies, below the *Dignity* of his *Nature*. A Man can never expose Himself more to the Attacks of his Enemy, than when He suffers Himself to be heated into a Passion, and thereby thrown off his Guard. While He can command his *Temper*, and preserve his *Reason*, He will know and consider what He does, and conduct with *Prudence* and *Discretion*; and will at length very probably both defend Himself, and become *superior* to his Adversary: But if once He lets go his Reason, and resigns Himself up to *Heat* and *Passion*, He both exposes his own *Safety*, and surrenders his Person to the Mercy of his Adversary. A passionate furious Warrior neither sees an Advantage, nor knows how to use it: While He is all Fire, and no Conduct, He does but expose his *Forces*, and at length becomes Himself an easy Prey to the Enemy. But a Man of *cool* and *steady Courage*, who does nothing precipitately, nothing rashly, He is the Man that maintains his Ground, and comes off victorious in the End. Let *Reason* *preside* always in any private Contests between Man and Man: And by the Help of Reason, all will proceed

proceed regularly, and with Honour and Advantage. Reason will consider always, not what the *Offender*, or injurious Person might *deserve*, but what may be *prudent*, and *proper* for the *offended Party to do*. Perhaps the Injury is slight, not deserving Notice, or deserving only Contempt. Whatever it be, there is more *Dignity and Greatness of Mind* shewn in being *above feeling it*, than in *fretting at it*. *Revengeing* it is still worse, because it betrays still greater Impatience; besides that it is imprudent, as *provoking the Adversaries*, and bringing on fresh Injuries; which again will call for Rejoinders, and so on in an endless Circulation. This is, generally speaking, the Case as to Revenge: So that, if We consider it merely upon a *rational Foot*, apart from *Religion*, there appears to be very little Sense or Discretion in it. And as to *Greatness of Mind*, every One must be sensible, that it is brave and generous to put up Wrongs, and overlook Offences; and that They, generally, are Persons of the *weakest and feeblest Minds*, Who are most *sensible of Injuries*, and most impatient for Revenge.

Seeing then that Wrath and Revenge is really Nothing else but the *Triumph of Passion over Reason*, and of Folly over Discretion and good Sense; every wise Man would take Care to assert and maintain the Superiority of his Reason, and not suffer Himself to be enslaved and overcome by mean and foolish Resentments.

2. But further, to advance to a yet *higher Consideration*, put the Case thus, or in these Terms: Suffer not any Affronts or Injuries to get the better of your *Piety*, or of your *Duty towards God*.

We learn from *Scripture* at least, if not from the *Light of Nature*, that all Manner of Vengeance belongs to God alone; so that the taking upon Us to avenge Our Selves, is presuming too far, is usurping upon the undoubted Rights and Prerogative of the Supreme Being. *To Me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence*, says Almighty God;* or, as St. PAUL words it and explains it at the same Time, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*.† God permits Us not to revenge, or resent our own Wrongs. We are no more than Fellow-Creatures, and Fellow-Servants One with Another: And if any Offence be committed, it is sufficient for Us to refer the Complaint to Him, the Judge of All, and our common Lord and Master. This is no more than every Master of a Family will demand; that any Disputes or Differences in his Family among his Servants, be decided by Him, and left to his Censure and

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Correction.

* Deut. xxxii. 35. † Rom. xii. 19.

Correction. God is an all-knowing Judge, and will exactly weigh the Merits of the Cause; and will, first or last, do Us Justice most effectually, when We are really wronged, if We leave it to Him. But if We take the Affair into our own Hands, and resolve to do Our Selves Justice, We do not only run the Risk of provoking and bringing upon Us fresh Injuries from Men; but as We are provoking God all the Time, We take the likely Way to draw down his Vengeance, not upon our *Enemies*, but upon our *own Heads*. The Question then, in Case of Offences, lies plainly thus: Will You leave it to God to punish Them as They deserve; or will You take the Matter into your own Hands? Supposing the Injury done You to be real and great, it may be *better* indeed for your Enemies, that You should take it in Hand, to revenge it; but it is much the *worst* for Your Selves. *Human Power*, at best, is *weak*, and *frail*; and besides, is under the irresistible *Check* and *Contrall* of the *Divine Hand*; so that it is infinitely uncertain, whether a Man, ever so much disposed to Revenge, can effect it. But if God undertakes to *do Vengeance*, He does it *effectually*, and no Arm can resist Him. I say then, that in Case of real Injuries, the surest Method of having them revenged, is to commit the Cause to God. And This is certainly the *best* and *safest Method* that the injured Party can take, in Order to have Redress and Satisfaction. God can recompense Us a thousand Ways, for any Wrongs We receive at the Hands of Men: And if We entirely commit our Cause to Him, He will not only do Us *Justice*, but will shew Us *Mercy* also, and make Us ample Amends.

But a Question here arises by the Way, whether, after a Man has referred his Cause to God, laying aside all Thoughts of revenging Himself, He may then pray to God to avenge Him; or may take Pleasure in observing that the Divine Vengeance has fallen down upon his Adversary.

Much may be pleaded on both Sides; but I must not run out into too tedious a Digression. I shall however offer a few Hints, and as briefly as may be. Our Blessed Lord upon the Cross prayed for his Murderers; *Father, forgive Them, &c.* And St. STEPHEN also did the like; *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge.* And even under the Old Testament, SOLOMON is commended, that, among other Things in his Prayer, He had not asked *the Life of his Enemies*. All this looks as if We were neither permitted to take Vengeance Our Selves upon any Man, nor so much as to desire, or to take Pleasure

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in, the Divine Vengeance when brought upon our Enemies; though One might think it should be Matter of Joy and Comfort to Us, as being of God's doing, being also a Kind of *Vindication* of our own *Innocency*, or of the Justice of the Cause We had engaged in.

On the other Hand, it may be observed, that there are many Passages in the Old Testament, in the *Psalms* more especially, which look like plain *Imprecations* upon the Wicked: And even in the New Testament, God comforts his Elect, by assuring Them, that *He will avenge Them speedily*, that is, of their Adversaries, as appears by what goes before;* which seems to suppose, that God's avenging a good Man of his Enemies, may be a reasonable Ground of Joy and Comfort to Him. Add to this, that St. PAUL, speaking of ALEXANDER the Coppersmith, as of One who had *done Him much Evil*, immediately subjoins, *The Lord reward Him according to his Works*;† Which is a Kind of imploring God's Judgments upon Him. And lastly, when St. PAUL says, *if thy Enemy hunger, feed Him; and if He thirst, give Him Drink*, He inforces his Advice by This Consideration; *For in so doing Thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head*;‡ which Words, in their most natural Construction, and as interpreted by the Context, seem to mean, that in so doing, Thou shalt *accumulate* the *Divine Vengeance* upon Him, if He repents not. All which looks as if it were allowable, in *some Cases*, both to *imprecate* the *Divine Vengeance* upon *Adversaries*, and to *rejoice* in it when it comes.

I have thus briefly represented the Force of the Arguments on both Sides the Question, for every reasonable Man to judge of; and I will not presume to be dogmatical and positive either Way: But what seems to me to come nearest to the Truth, is as follows.

The Peace of the World is much concerned in This; that We never *avenge our selves*, but refer *all Vengeance to God*. This is the main Thing; and if this be carefully observed, We may be the less solicitous about the rest. There is a *just Pleasure* which a *good Man* may take, in seeing the *Divine Vengeance* fall upon very *bad Men*, because such Men are Enemies to Mankind; and so *rejoicing in Their Fall*, is *rejoicing in the Public Good*: And for the same Reason, it may not be improper, in some Cases, to beg of God to curb, restrain, or punish Them, in such a Way as his Wisdom shall see proper: And it is of such Cases as these that I understand some Scripture-Imprecations, if they be really such;

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which,

• Luke xviii. 2. † 2 Tim. iv. 14. ‡ Rom. xii. 20.

which, besides, were pronounced by Persons *extraordinarily commissioned* to imprecate, as from God.

As to *private Injuries*, in which the Public is very little, or not at all concerned, there, as I conceive, there is no Room left for *rejoicing* in the *Divine Judgments* upon the *Adversaries*; *first*, because We are very *uncertain* whether those Judgments are brought upon Them on any such Account as We might fondly suppose; and *next*, because, as We are all *Sinners*, We know not whether *We our selves* are not justly liable to the *same* or *greater*. This only We may presume to think and do, if at any Time God remarkably delivers Us from the Rage of an Enemy, by afflicting Him, or taking Him out of the World; We may rejoice in our happy Deliverance, and thank God for his Indulgence towards Us; but at the same Time retaining a compassionate Tenderness and Charity for the unhappy Man.—So much for this Point, which came in only by the Way; and from which now I return to what I was before upon.

I had been observing, that We are in no Case to avenge our Selves, but humbly and modestly to refer all Vengeance to God. If We do otherwise, We suffer Our Selves to be *overcome of Evil*, contrary to the Advice of the Text: We let our *Passions* prevail over Us; that is, over *Religion, Conscience, Duty*, and the Reverence we owe to God; which, at length, is not *triumphing* over an Adversary, as some may vainly imagine, but it is *meanly submitting* to Sin and Folly, and suffering the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, to triumph over Us.

3. Having shewn how We ought not to suffer any Offence or Injury to get the better of our *Piety* towards God; I have but one Step more to advance; namely, not to suffer it to prevail over our *Charity* towards Man.

This Article I make *distinct* from the former, in as much as not *taking Revenge* upon an Adversary is one Thing, and doing Him *kind Offices* is another. I say then, let not any injurious Usage of an Enemy prevent our *doing Him Good*. A great deal of what might be said upon this Article, may more properly fall under my next general Head; and therefore thither I refer it. Only here I may observe, that, if any Injuries *provoke* a Man to withdraw such *friendly Offices* as belong to *Humanity*, He is then overcome by his Resentments, and is too much a *Slave to his Passions*. It is one Kind of Revenge, and sometimes, all the Revenge which a Man has in his Power to take; and so is altogether *ungenerous* and *unjustifiable*. All that Reason or Scripture allows, is, to defend

defend and guard Our Selves, as far as We *innocently* can, against such as mean Us Hurt; but not to *afflict* Them, or put Them to Pain by Way of Retaliation; nor to leave Them under hard Necessity, or Distress, when We can, with Safety to Our Selves, step in to relieve Them. When an Enemy is reduced so low, as even to want the Necessaries of Life, or any Way to stand in Need of the Succour of the Man He hates, it would be a *mean* Thing to refuse it. Every One who has any *Spirit* of Generosity, or *Christian Charity*, would be glad, when such Occasions offer, to have the *Pleasure* of doing a kind Thing, and to have it *kindly* accepted from Him. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed Him; and if He thirsts, give Him Drink*, says the Apostle, in this Chapter: Which now leads me to treat of the *Second Part* or Precept of my Text, which is *positive*.

II.

Overcome Evil with Good. This implies all the *kind Offices* towards an Enemy, which We are capable of doing, consistent with our *own Safety*, or with our *Obligations* to Others. Our Blessed Lord's Instructions upon this Head, may serve as a good Comment upon this Part of the Text; *Love your Enemies, bless Them that curse You, do Good to Them that hate You, and pray for Them which despitefully use You and persecute You: that Ye may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven,* || &c. This is what We are to do towards Enemies, and this the Way, whereby We are to *overcome Evil with Good*: Only it remains to shew *how*, or in what Sense, this Kind of Conduct towards Them is here called by the Apostle *overcoming Evil with Good*.

There are two Ways of understanding this Matter; as *overcoming Evil* may either mean conquering the Enemy by *Kindness*, so that He shall *cease* to do Us Evil; for then *the Evil is overcome*, is quashed, and put an End to: Or, it may mean persisting and persevering to the last in *doing Good against Evil* (when the Adversary is not at all softened, or altered by it) for this, if it be not quashing, or putting an End to the Adversary's Malignity, is yet being *above it*, and maintaining a kind of *Superiority* over it. — But both these Articles will want to be explained more distinctly.

1. *First*, I say, the *overcoming Evil with Good*, may be understood of *conquering an Enemy by Kindness*, so that He may cease to malign Us: For then *the Evil is overcome*, as it

is

is quashed and put an End to. A generous Enemy will be wrought upon this Way, and become a Friend: Though it must be owned, that Men of mean and abject Tempers, will be always both more insulting, and more cruel for such kind Usage. Nevertheless, the same Kind Usage is to be shewn to *Both*; because We know not *Who* may at length prove to be of a generous Temper, and *Who* not; but principally because *God requires it*; and if such Conduct has not the desired Effect, as to melting the Adversary into Kindness, yet We are sure to have our Reward for our Charity *another Way*, at the Hands of Almighty God. But to proceed. It may frequently be observed, that, after Contests or Differences have arisen between Man and Man, if *either* Side does but leave off saying, or doing *spiteful Things*, a Quarrel soon dies, and the Men become Friends. How much more may We suppose such Effect to follow, if Either of the Parties does not only forbear every Thing provoking, but, over and above, says and does *kind and good-natured Things* to oblige his Adversary: The Breach will then probably be made up *the sooner*, and the Friendship afterwards last *the longer*. Such a Conduct contributes much to the Peace of Society, and to the general Good of Mankind; which is alone sufficient to recommend it with every wise and considering Man. And that it may not be suspected that there is any Thing of *Tame-ness*, or *Mean-spiritedness* in this Conduct, the Advantage in Point of *Dignity* and *Esteem* really lies on the Side of the good-natured and peaceable Man. There is a *Greatness of Mind* shewn in being *above* little Piques, and childish Altercations: There is Triumph and *Conquest* seen in the *Command* a Man has over his own *Temper*, and *Passions*; and there is further a most glorious *Victory* gained over his Adversary, while He thus conquers Him by Kindness, and goes beyond Him in wise Conduct, and Generosity. Upon all which Account, the kind and peaceable Man is so far from *sinking* his Character, that He *raises it the more* by such handsome Demeanour, and attracts the Reverence and Esteem of all discerning Judges. Besides all which, He has the Pleasure and Comfort of having a Friend and Companion to Himself, instead of an Enemy; and the Satisfaction also of having *made* Him *such*, which is like the making of a Convert, or the healing of a Patient; as it is laying his Passions, and correcting the Disorders of his Mind. And this is the first Way of *overcoming Evil with Good*. But because such Effect does not *always* follow, for there are some stubborn Tempers

Temper which no Kindnesses can mollify, I must observe,
Secondly,

2. That there is yet another Kind of Conquest to be obtained, by persisting and persevering in *doing Good against Evil*. For though You do not thus conquer the Man's *Pride* or *Ill-Nature*, yet You conquer your own *Passions*; and at the same Time maintain such a *Superiority* over the Enemies *Malice*, that it shall not be able either to conquer your good Nature, or draw You off from your steady Principles of *Love* and *Charity*. There is a Kind of Contest and Emulation in such a Case, Which shall be first weary and vanquished, the *Malice* and *Iniquity* of *One*, or the *Patience* and *Goodness* of the *Other*. He who abides and persists in doing Good against Evil, may be said to be a Person of *invincible Kindness* and *Generosity*, unconquerable *Love* and *Charity*. In this Manner, MOSES held out against the infinite Obloquies, Murmurings, and Revilings of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, still obliging and serving Them, and praying for Them. Thus also DAVID persisted in his Duty and Loyalty towards SAUL, notwithstanding all the ill Usage He met with from Him: And no imaginable Rudeness, Malice, or Persecution, could at all move or shake his most invincible Constancy and Fidelity. And to name no more, our Blessed LORD Himself was a bright Example of the like Love and Charity to the last, *going about doing Good*, both to Friends and Foes, weeping over JERUSALEM, which thirsted for his Blood; and at length praying for his Murderers while He hung upon the Cross. This is *overcoming Evil with Good*; to stand firm and unshaken in Love and Kindness, against all Provocations, and ill Usage. It is triumphing over the Adversary, to shew that, with all his Rage and Inveteracy, He shall *never be able* so much as to tempt You to *retaliate*, or to move You to do like Him. Let Him proceed as He pleases, He shall never make You stoop to do any Thing *mean*, or to act a Part *unworthy of Your Self*. This is noble and manly Carriage: And He who thus acts, though He does not *soften* his Adversary, yet has plainly the *Advantage* of Him, and triumphs over Him. God so deals with Sinners, and so should We: For, when neither his Sunshine warms Them into a Love of Him, nor his Showers have any Force to soften Them into Compliance with Him; yet He persists in sending Both, making his *Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good*; and sending Rain on the *Just* and on the *Unjust*.||

I know,

I know but one Objection of any Moment against this Conduct, which is This; that it may seem to give too much Encouragement to malicious Men, to persist in their Iniquity; and may also strengthen their Hands against Our Selves, to do Us the more Mischief: To which I answer, that, were it really true, that it carried this *single Inconvenience* with it; yet, so long as there are *innumerable Conveniences* on the other Side, more than sufficient to counterbalance it, This *single Difficulty* ought to be no Objection against it. But I have this Thing to add further; that the Principles which I have been maintaining, do not oblige a Man to lay Himself open to his Enemy, or to give *Himself* up into *his Power*. He may do Him *kind Offices*, without making a *Friend* or a *Confident* of Him; may oblige and serve Him, without running into his Arms. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed Him; if He thirst, give Him Drink.* The Scripture bids Us be kind and generous; and yet bids Us also *beware of ill Men*, and not to deliver Our Selves up tamely, and thoughtlessly into their Hands. Love and Charity are *one Thing*; Easiness and Folly, *another*. Be well assured of a Man's Friendship, before You admit Him into your Retirements and Confidence: But be He ever so malicious, yet serve Him, at a *proper Distance*; and oblige Him also if You can, but without betraying, or exposing *Your Self*. Indeed as to any distant, and imaginary Dangers from an Enemy, strengthened in some Measure by your Favours towards Him, those must be risked; And God's *Providence* is our *Security* in such Cases, as in a thousand others, where a Thing equally may, or may not happen. Distant Surmises, and mere Suspensions are too slight to deserve any Regard, or to bear any Weight in this *important Matter*.

To conclude then: Let the Duty of the Text stand in its full Force, notwithstanding the Objection which I have been answering. And now, after explaining the Duty as far as seemed necessary, it remains only that We go and put it in Practice. Which that We may, God of his Mercy grant, &c.



S E R M O N XVIII.

The Nature and Purport of our Lord's Parable
of the *Publican* and *Pharisee*.

LUKE XVIII. 14.

I tell You, This Man went down to his House justified, rather than the Other: For, Every One that exalteth Himself, shall be abased; and He that humbleth Himself, shall be exalted.

THESE Words are the Conclusion of a noted Parable, which our Lord delivered for a just Rebuke upon Pride and Censoriousness. He spake it unto certain Persons, who trusted in Themselves that They were righteous, and despised Others. The Parable itself runs thus: *Two Men went up into the Temple to pray: The One a Pharisee, and the Other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with Himself: God, I thank Thee, that I am not as Other Men are; Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers; or even as this Publican: I fast twice in the Week; I give Tithes of all that I possess*——So said the assuming, self-admiring Pharisee. But in the mean while, the modest and humble Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his Eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, *God be merciful to Me a Sinner*. Now, our Lord's Reflection upon the whole Case, after thus comparing the two Men, and their Manners, was: *I tell You, this Publican went down to his House justified, rather than the Pharisee: For, Every One that exalteth Himself, shall be abased; and He that humbleth Himself, shall be exalted.*

The *Pharisee*, it seems, was a Man of a strict, regular Life, religious in his Deportment towards God, and righteous also in
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his outward Dealings towards Men : But withall, He was full of *Spiritual Pride*, and *Censoriousness*. The Publican was a Man of the World, given perhaps to *Extortions* and *Exactions* (the common Vices of his *Profession*) but *modest* however, and *unpretending*, and if not *thoroughly penitent*, yet in a *fair Way* towards it, in a *fit Disposition* for it. Our Lord does not say, *absolutely*, that *Either* of the Two was *justified* : But He speaks *comparatively*, that *One* was so, rather than the Other. The Publican's *loose Life*, if not *thoroughly corrected* and *reformed*, would *condemn Him* ; and the Pharisee's *Pride* and *Censoriousness* would *condemn Him* : But still, in the mean Season, the Publican's *Humility* before God, would be found *more acceptable*, notwithstanding his *otherwise irregular Life*, than the Pharisee's *religious Strictness* could be, while *tarnished with Censoriousness, Ostentation, and Pride of Heart* : For, *God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace unto the Humble*†. So much in the *general*. But for our clearer understanding the *Nature* and *Parport* of this Parable, and the *practical Uses* to be made of it, I shall proceed to a more *distinct View* of its *several Parts*, pointing out the *doctrinal Observations* which naturally arise from them.

I. We may take Notice, that, be a Man's Life and Conversation, otherwise, ever so *religious* and *regular* ; yet, if He is *proud* and *censorious* all the Time, *assuming* upon his *Performances*, and *resting* hardly on his *Neighbours* ; that Man's *Religion* and *Regularity* is *vain* ; He shall not be *justified* in God's Sight. His *Self-Admiration*, and his *Contempt of Others*, will more, than counterballance his *Pretences to Virtue*, and will cancel, in a Manner, all his *Godliness*.

The *Pharisee* began well ; *God, I thank Thee* : He should have added, “ if I have any Thing *praise-worthy* in Me, “ or have done any Thing *acceptable* in thy Sight ; for it is “ all owing to thy *Grace*, and in *Myself* I am *Nothing*.” Such an Address to the *Divine Majesty* might have been *modest* and *becoming* ; especially if He had gone on to *enumerate* his many or great *Offences*, and *humbly* to *implore Pardon* for them : But instead of This, He says, *God, I thank Thee*, that *I am not as other Men are* ; *Extortioners*, &c. What had He to do, to come before God with *Accusations* in his Mouth against *other Men* ; perhaps *false* and *injurious*, but most certainly *foreign*, and *impertinent* ? The *Sins* or *Failings* of *other Persons*, was no *Concern* of his in his *Prayers* : But *Self-Accusation*, or *Self-Humiliation* might have come *very decently* and *properly* from Him, in his *Supplications*

plications to an offended God. He was disposed to dwell only on his imaginary Perfections, and to throw a Veil over his Sins. His Self-Flattery prompted Him to magnify his own Services, taking a false Estimate of Himself from an ill-natured Comparison, which could serve only to deceive Him, rather than justify Him. For, what if some Others were really worse than He in some certain Respects? it would not follow from thence, that He was better than They upon the Whole; much less, that He had any just Pretence for Boasting before God.

The Publican, with better Colour (had his Modesty permitted) might have said, "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as some Men are; proud, uncharitable, censorious, or even as this Pharisee: I boast not of my own Virtues, I confess my Transgressions, and am ready to make all due Allowances for the Failings of Others, as much as for my own." Such a Prayer as this (though far from becoming, or proper) might as reasonably have been offered up by the Publican, as the other by the Pharisee: But Both would have been wrong: For, the important Question, which every conscientious Person has to ask Himself, is, not whether his Life and Conversation be comparatively better, in Whole or in Part, than what He commonly sees; but whether it be simply and plainly such as the Gospel requires. He may often mistake in thinking Himself better than his Neighbours, whom He may chance to judge too hardly of: But were He ever so clear and certain in That Point, it concerns Him little; because, allowing it to be true, He may still be far from perfect, and may fall very short of the Gospel-Rule.

Besides, if, instead of looking into his Failures, He chooses only to make Ostentation of his own real, or imaginary Advances in Godliness; and if, instead of condemning Himself, He affects rather to lay heavy Charges upon Others; He may then be certain, that He is proud, and censorious: And those black Vices of the Mind are as odious in God's Sight, or perhaps more odious, than any other Offences which can be named; being utterly repugnant to the two great Commandments, The Love of God, and the Love of our Neighbour.

And there is this further Consideration to shew the dangerous Nature of those Vices; that while They render a Man vain and self-confident, they leave Him in no Disposition to repent, but serve only to buoy Him up under a false Conceit, that He needs no Repentance. They who are once swelled with an high Opinion of their present Attainments, will be the Last who will ever think of reforming, or improving their Lives. This is what our Blessed Lord had an

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Eye to, when He said to the *Chief-Priests* and *Pharisees*, in the Way of solemn Rebuke, *Verily I say unto You, that the Publicans and the Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before You.*† Why so? might some ask; what, were those loose and *profligate Creatures* at all worthy to be compared with those devout and religious Men, Men of *strict Life*, and exemplary Conversation, to all Appearance? Yes, *They* were *worthy* so far: Because those *profligate Creatures* were sometimes *humble enough to repent*, and *They did repent*; but the other Sort, who had Faults also, and great ones (though not so scandalous) had withall so much *Pride* and *High-mindedness*, that *They* imagined it more their Business to sit as *Censors* and *Correctors* over all *Mankind*, than to confess their *own Sins*, or to *repent* of them. In this View, though *They* were *otherwise* Persons of *sober Lives*, and of great Regularity, in the Eyes of the World, *They* were yet the *farthest* of *Any* from the *Kingdom of God*.—*Spiritual Pride*, accompanied with *Censoriousness* and haughty Disdain, are Vices of so malignant a Nature, and so *provoking* in *God's Sight*, that they effectually *cancel all our Virtues*, if We may call them *Virtues*: In a strict Sense, We have *no Virtue*, *no Religion*, *no acceptable Grace* at all, if We are *void of Humility*.

2. I may next take Notice, that the *Publican's Humility* before God and Man, though joined with an *irregular Life*, was what gave Him the *Preference* in our Lord's Esteem: Not that He could be *justified* in a loose Course of Life, but He was in a *nearer Way* to it, than the *proud Pharisee*; because *nearer to Repentance* and *Reformation*. His Faults indeed were *great* (Ex:ortion perhaps, and such other Irregularities as are commonly met with in *secular Men*) but nevertheless they were Faults of such a Kind, as did not *foreclose* all *Reformation*, or *Amendment*. While there was *Humility* yet left in Him, and a becoming Sense of his own Sins and Infirmities, and of his need of Divine Mercy, there was good Hope of *Repentance*, and some *fair Advances* made towards it. He durst not *presume* so much as to *look up* towards Heaven, *conscious* of his *own Vileness*: There was *Modesty*; there was *Remorse*, and *profound Reverence* for God Whom He had offended. He had *no Claims* to make, *no Services* to *boast of*, at least not *before God*: But yet He cast not away all *Hopes* of Favour, while He smote upon his Breast, and said, *God, be merciful to Me a Sinner!* Merciful, first, to *give Him Grace* to amend his Life; and next, to *pardon all his Offences* duly *repented of*: For so, as I conceive, We may presume to interpret.

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We cannot well understand this his *humble* and *modest* Ejaculation as so many Words of Course, such as *hardened Sinners* might at Times be willing to throw out; for then our Lord would not have said what He has said in his Favour: Neither, on the other Hand, do I see Reason sufficient in the Text, to persuade Us, that the *Publican* had yet *changed his sinful Course* of Life; for, what great Matter were it to say, that a *reformed Publican* is a better Man than an *unreformed Pharisee*, a *proud censorious Pharisee*? But the Truth of the Case, and the true Purport of the *Parable* appears to be (as I have before hinted) that an *humble Publican*, disposed towards Repentance, is, with all his *Vices*, more *acceptable to God*, than a *proud censorious Pharisee*, with all his *Strictness*, *Sobriety*, and *Regularity*. And the Reason of the *Preference* here given resolves into This; that the *One* was *penitent in Part*, or in *some Degree*, and was in a *fair Way* to a thorough Change of *Heart and Life*; while the *Other* remained altogether *impenitent*; so far from *correcting* or *amending his Life*, that He had not so much as a *Sense of his being a Sinner*, or of his *needing any Repentance*.

God has such Regard to *Humility of Spirit*, even in Persons *otherwise vicious*, that He looks the *more favourably* upon Them on *that Score*: Which appeared in the Case of King AHAB. *Seest Thou* (said God to ELIJAH the Prophet) *how AHAB humbleth Himself before Me? Because He humbleth Himself before Me, I will not bring the Evil in his Days,* &c.* AHAB's *Humiliation* was real and *sincere*, for the *Time*; but it amounted not to a full and *perfect Repentance*. He continued a very *bad Man* in many Respects, notwithstanding such his *sincere Humiliation* for the *Time being*: Yet, because He did not behave *proudly*, as Some before Him had done, after Divine Sentence passed upon Him, but *humbled Himself* before God and the World; therefore God *remitted Part* of the Punishment, *otherwise due* unto Him. Such Regard was had to *Humility* in that Instance, shewing itself only in some *transient Acts*, which were far short of a full and *perfect Repentance*.

These Things considered, We may from thence learn to judge the *more favourably* of some Kind of Persons, whom We may sometimes see led away by the *Vehemence* and *Impetuosity* of their *Vices* or *Passions*; but *condemning Themselves* all the Time, and *humbly suing* to God for Mercy and Pardon. For, though God will not *pardon Them*, till They *change their sinful Course* of Life, and thoroughly amend their Ways; yet their

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their present Humiliation and Self-Abasement is a promising Symptom, which may have its Use, and will not want its Reward. God will, on that Account, be the more inclined to give Them Grace to perfect their Repentance. It is a Scripture-Maxim, laid down in the *Psalms*,* repeated in the *Proverbs*,† inculcated also by St. JAMES,‡ and again by St. PETER,§ that God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble. An humble Sinner is in a Way to forsake his Sins. His Self-Abasement is one Degree of Penitence; and according as He becomes more and more humble, so God will supply more and more Grace, to work in Him a thorough Change both of Heart and Life. The proud Pharisee, though He had made great Advances in outside Virtue and Godliness, yet, by indulging his Pride and Self-Flattery, He not only checked his further Progress, but really went backward, and lost Ground: While the humble Publican, though hitherto unpractised in Virtue and Piety, was however entering upon it, and was upon the improving Hand: And therefore it was, that this Man went down to his House justified, rather than the Other. But,

3. The Use which We are to make of the two Cases taken together, is, to reject what was bad in Both; and to adopt what was praise-worthy in Either. The Pharisee was a Person of a strict and sober Life, but He was proud: The Publican was humble, but withall He was a Person of loose Morals.—Both were blameable in their several Ways, while, in other Respects, Both deserved Commendation; the Publican especially, to Whom our Lord gave the Preference. What then are We to learn from all? Reject the Pharisee's Pride and Censoriousness: And reject also the Publican's loose Morals. Put on the Pharisee's strict Kind of Life, together with the Publican's Humility, and then All will be right. To make the Advice the clearer, I shall now severally treat of both Parts.

1. First, I say, let it be our Care to follow what was really good and commendable in the Pharisee: He was no Extortioner, He wronged no Man in his Property; He was no Adulterer, or the like: Our Lord does not charge Him with saying any Thing false of Himself: His Report, probably, was true: But He was blameable for boasting even of what was Fact. Beside his negative Accomplishments, that He was no Extortioner, no unjust Dealer, and no Adulterer; He had something further to plead: He made up his weekly Accounts with God; He fasted twice in the Week; and with his

* Psalm cxxxviii. 6. † Prov. iii. 34. ‡ James iv. 6. § Pet. v. 5

his Fasting. We may presume, He joined serious and solemn Devotions: And, to shew his further Respect for God, He paid what the Law had ordered to God's Authorized Ministers; He paid Tythes of all that He possessed, in a punctual Manner, and in a Way altogether blameless; excepting that He was proud of doing it.

We have here, to all Appearance, a very fair, and very exemplary Character drawn to the Life, and allowed also to be true. Follow Him therefore *so far*, namely, in his Sobriety, his Temperance, and his *Ghastity*; in his honest and upright Dealings between Man and Man; and likewise in his weekly Care to settle his Accounts with God.——Fasting may properly be added to Devotions, in Order to raise them higher, or to fix them yet stronger upon the Heart: But This must be understood with Allowances, according as Health, or Leisure, or Opportunities, or other Circumstances favour. The Pharisee found Leisure, or he made Leisure, sufficient for it; and He did well in it, if He could but have been content, not to boast of it, nor to value Himself too much upon it, nor to pass hard Censures upon Others, as falling far short of Him in those Respects.

Take We Care then, to distinguish the good Part from the evil Part, and to set it before Us for our Approbation and Imitation. Follow not the Publican in his loose Life, in his irregular or careless Ways; but rather follow the Pharisee in his strict Course of Life, and in his circumspect Conduct, whereby He hoped to please God; and wherein He could not have failed, if He had but been as humble and candid in Heart, as He was strict and exemplary in Life.

2. Therefore, Secondly, after taking Care to live the sober and exemplary Life of the Pharisee, make We it our chief Endeavour to superadd thereto the Humility and Candor of the Publican; that so We may be perfect and entire, thoroughly furnished unto every good Work.

But this, perhaps, may be thought a very hard Lesson. I could be content, says One, to live a pious, sober, exemplary Life: But surely, after taking so much Pains, I have a Right to value my Self upon it, and to think much better of my Self than of my less considering Neighbours. I could be content, says Another, to entertain very low Opinions of my Self, and to become vile in my own Eyes, and often to cry out, *God be merciful to Me a Sinner*, provided only that I may but be permitted to indulge my own Heart's Lusts, and continue in my darling Sins.

But Neither of these Ways will answer the Purpose. We must be *holy* in all Conversation and Godliness, and yet as *humble* as if We had no Virtues at all: We must Every One of Us do our utmost to serve and please Almighty God; and when We have done all, be content at length to smite our Breasts, and say, *God be merciful to Me a Sinner*. The Reason is, because our very best Services are imperfect; and if *We say that We have no Sin, We deceive Our Selves, and the Truth is not in Us*. Now, when We come to make our Addresses before God, He does not want to be told, how holy, or how religious, or how perfect We are: He is a better Judge of That, than We can pretend to be; and He knows our Failings and Deficiencies. Neither can it be of any Use to Us, to look only on the brighter Side, and to hide the rest, lest We be tempted to stop there, and to conceive that We need Nothing further. Our Business is to be always advancing and pressing forwards, and not so much to consider what We have *already gained*, as what We *still want*. Look We therefore upon our *Failings*, and lay them before God: Not because He *does not know* them, but because He alone can *supply* them, either with new Succours of his *Grace*, or with repeated Acts of *Pardon*. This is the Reason why *Confession of Sins* (which the *Pharisee* omitted) ought always to make a principal Part of our Prayers: And another as essential a Part is, to throw Our Selves entirely upon the all-sufficient *Merits* and *Mediation* of CHRIST JESUS our Lord. *Innocence* of our own, We have none to appear in, before God: Broken Innocence, made up in some Measure by true *Repentance*, is the utmost *Perfection* that fallen Man can pretend to: And all That would be too little, and too impure for God's Acceptance, were it not further recommended, and made worthy, by the all-prevailing *Atonement* and *Intercession* of CHRIST.

Enough has been said to take away all Pretence or Colour for *spiritual Pride*. It was not pardonable in the *Angels*; because, though They had very great *Perfections*, yet They owed Them all to God: But it is monstrous in *Man*, because *Man* has no *Perfection* in Comparison to the Other; and even that little which He has, is all owing to the *Grace* of God.

I would not be understood, by any Thing I have here said, to lessen the real and solid Satisfaction of a well-spent Life. The most profound Humility is perfectly consistent with full Peace of Mind, and will rather add to it, than take any Thing from it. A Man may be very sensible of his having faithfully

fully discharged his Duty, without over-valuing Himself upon it. And, though He knows that his best Services are imperfect, and that his Infirmities are great, and his Failings many, and that He can have no strict Claim to a Pardon, much less to a Reward; yet He knows withall, that such his sincere, though imperfect Services (being as much as, humanly speaking, He is capable of performing) will be accepted as perfect, thro' the Merits and Mediation of Him who is perfect: And from these Considerations taken together, there will arise an inward Calm, a peaceful Serenity in every good Man's Breast. And though I will not say, but that a Self-Admirer may, through some strong Delusion, depart hence as confident, or more confident of his own Salvation, than the most humble Saint may do; yet I know not whether such false Confidence brings with it so Divine a Pleasure, as a more rational, and more modest Assurance will do: Or if it should, yet the changing of the Scene will soon manifest the Difference between a wise Man's humble Expectations, and a Fool's Paradise.

So much for the Publican's Humility with Regard to Himself: I should next throw in a Word or two of his Candor or his Charity with Respect to Others; as to which also He deserves both our Admiration and Imitation. He brought in no invidious, no ill-natured Reflections upon Others: He condemned no Man, He accused no Man but Himself. He might have pleaded the many evil Examples of a wicked World, to screen Himself the better behind a Crowd, or to make Himself appear the fairer, by producing Them as Foils to Himself: But He was wiser than to offer such poor Excuses, such thin Coverings as those, to an all-seeing God: Neither would He be hasty to condemn Others, while He was imploring Mercy for Himself: He knew what Offences Himself had been guilty of: He knew Nothing certainly of Others, but that it was no Business of his, to accuse Them before God, or to make Himself a Judge over Them: This Part of his Conduct was wise and commendable; and so far He stands recommended to Us, as a Pattern for Us to copy after.

Not that We are hereby totally prohibited forming Comparisons between Our Selves and Others; for how is it possible altogether to avoid it? Neither is there any Thing amiss in endeavouring to go beyond Many, in our religious Advances, or in believing that We do so, when We have Grounds sufficient for it: Neither is it necessary for an humble Man to think Himself worse than He really is, or to condemn Himself as the vilest of Sinners, and the like: He may be allowed to think justly, and according to Truth, as well with Respect to

Himself, as with Respect to *other* Persons: For, Nothing *unreasonable* or *untrue* can be expected of Us, or be well-pleasing to God. The Fault of the *assuming Pharisee* lay, in the making a *false* Estimate of *Himself*, and a *false* Judgment also of *Others*, upon the Comparison. He was not so good a Man, in the Main, as the despised *Publican*; but his *Pride*, *Disdain*, and *Insolence* (as black Vices as any can be) shewed Him to be one of the *vilest* of Sinners.

Take We Care then to live circumspectly in our whole Conduct, obeying every Commandment of God, and guarding against all Kind of Vices; but more particularly against *Pride* (spiritual Pride) and *Censoriousness*; uncreaturely Sins, odious and abominable in God's Sight. An *humble Temper* of Mind is the *Root of all Virtue*, and the Perfection also of all godly Living. The Way to attain it, and to preserve it, is to dwell much and often upon our *Failings* and *Miscarriages*, upon our natural *Proneness to Evil*, and upon the many *Imperfections* even of our *best Services*; remembering that We are *Nothing in Our Selves*, but that all our *Sufficiency* is of God; and that *That very Sufficiency* will not render Us accepted, without the additional *imputed Merits* of our Saviour CHRIST.

If We are minded to compare Our Selves with other Persons, We may look into the exemplary Lives and Deaths of *Saints* and *Martyrs*, recorded in Scripture, or in Church-History; observing what *Labours*, what *Watchings*, what *Fastings*, what *Fatigues*, what *Torments* They waded through, for the Kingdom of Heaven; *humble* all the while, and *lowly* in their *own Eyes*, looking upon Themselves as no better than *unprofitable Servants* of the Lord Whom They served; as indeed They were no better.

May We follow such bright Examples, at an humble Distance, and in such a Degree as We are capable of doing! that, while *They shine* as Stars of the *first Magnitude* in the Kingdom of Heaven, *We* may hope, however, after a well-spent Life, to be received into some *lower Rank* in the same Everlasting Habitations.

S E R M O N XIX.

The *General* Rule of God's Dealing with Mankind; and the *Same* applied to the Case of *Jews* and *Gentiles* at large, and of *Christians* in particular, compared with Each Other.

MATTH. XX. 16.

So the Last shall be First, and the First Last: For Many be called, but Few chosen.

THESE Words conclude the Parable of the Labourers hired into the Vineyard at several different Hours of the Day; the *Morning* Hour, the *Third* Hour, the *Sixth*, the *Ninth*, and the *Eleventh*.

The *Jewish* Way of computing their Time, was, to begin with Sun-rise, and to end with Sun-set; reckoning *Twelve* Hours to the Day: Whereas our Way, now in Use, begins at Mid-night, and ends at Mid-day; which makes six Hours Difference in the Order of Computation.

To understand the several Hours at which the Labourers were hired, They were, in our Stile, and according to our Reckoning, thus: Early in the Morning, about *Six*, the *first* Labourers were hired; then again at *Nine* in the Morning were hired *more*; at *Twelve*, our Noon, *more* still; and at *Three* in the Afternoon, *more*; the *last* of all at *Five* in the Afternoon, answering to what the *Jews* called the *eleventh* Hour.

At these several Times, the Householder in the Parable hired Labourers to work in his Vineyard: And when the *Even* was come, that is, *six* o'Clock at Night, the Lord of the Vineyard was to pay Them for their Day's Work. Some

of Them had been labouring the *whole Day*, from *Six to Six*, twelve Hours; Others from *Nine to Six*; Others from *Twelve to Six*; Others from *Three to Six*; and the Last of All but a *single Hour*, from *Five to Six*. Now, the Lord of the Vineyard, however unequal their Times of Labour had been, was yet pleased to give Them All the very same Wages: That is, He paid Every Man the usual Wages for a *whole Day's Work*; beginning at the Last, and so going on to the First. The *First* had no just Reason to complain, because They were paid their *full Hire*, as much as They had agreed for, and as much as Any Man could reasonably demand for a Day's Work: They had therefore no Injustice done Them: But yet, it seems, They were not well pleased, but *murmured against the good Man of the House*, for being so beneficent and liberal to Others: *These Last*, say They, *have wrought but one Hour, and Thou hast made Them equal unto Us, which have born the Burden and Heat of the Day*. They could not pretend that He had given Them *too little*, or that their Work deserved *more*; but their Complaint was, that He had been barely *just* to Them, when He had been *kind* and liberal to Others: And upon This They were disposed to murmur; putting in their Claim to an *equal Share* in their Lord's Goodness and Generosity. In Return to their Complaint, the Lord of the Vineyard thus answers One of Them: *Friend, I do Thee no Wrong: Didst not Thou agree with Me for a Penny? Take That thine is, and go thy Way; I will give unto this Last even as unto Thee. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with my own? Is thine Eye evil, because I am good?*—And thus endeth the Parable. The Moral of it then follows: *So the Last shall be First, and the First Last; for Many be called, but Few chosen*. The Parable was undoubtedly intended to represent *God's Dealings with Mankind*, in Regard both to their *outward Call* to the *Means of Grace*, and to the *future Retribution* in a State of Glory. For the further clearing of the Whole, my Design is,

- I. To state the Thing in *general*; shewing upon what *general Rules* and *Maxims* *God's Dealings* with Mankind are founded.
- II. To apply those *general Rules* to the Case of *Jews* and *Gentiles* at large, and of *Christians* in particular, compared with Each Other.

I.

I shall endeavour to state the Thing in *general*; shewing upon what *general Rules* and *Maxims* *God's Dealings* with Mankind are founded.

1. We may lay it down for a certain Truth, or Maxim, that God is no *Respecter of Persons*, nor subject to any partial Fondness in the Distributions of his Favours. All his Disposals are *strictly just*, and *equitable*, founded in Reasons of consummate Wisdom, Goodness, and Equity. His Favours indeed are free; and He may *do what He will with his own*: He may call Whom He pleases to the *Means of Grace* here, and so to *eternal Happiness* hereafter. It is of his own pure Goodness that He either *created*, or has *redeemed* any Man; or that He shall confer eternal Happiness upon Him. No One has any strict Claim upon Him in any of these Respects, that He should presume to call God his Debtor, or to murmur against Him, as doing Him any Wrong, by withholding from Him such Blessings as are merely Matter of free Bounty and Favour. And This is intimated in a lively Manner by the Parable, to prevent all aspiring Thoughts, and proud Assumings; to keep Men humble and modest, especially in their Claims upon God, the Lord of the whole Universe, and the Sovereign Judge of all the World. Nevertheless, We may be allowed to think, nay, We are bound both to think and say, that, saving to God his absolute Freedom and Sovereignty, He has such a Regard, not only to strict Justice, but even to Equity too, in all his Dealings with Men, as to observe an *exact Equality* and *Proportion* in his Distributions towards Them: Which in many Cases may appear plain to Us; and would so in all; were We let into the whole Secret of the Divine Conduct, and could see through all the Circumstances: And therefore, whenever God is represented in Holy Scripture as acting *arbitrarily*, and after his own *Will and Pleasure*, the Design of it is only This; that it is sufficient for Us low Creatures, to know that it is *his Pleasure*; We ought to acquiesce and rest satisfied in it; though at the same Time it be certain (and so much We ought to infer) that, *because it is his Pleasure*, it is *therefore* wise, just, and good; whether We see the Reasons for it, or whether We do not. We are certain in the general, and so much Scripture itself, as well as true and sound Reason, informs Us, that a strict *Proportion* is observed in *God's Dealings* with Men; and that all *equitable Considerations* are constantly taken into Account, *To Whomsoever*

soever much is given, of Him shall be much required; and to Whomsoever less is given, the less shall be demanded of Him.

It appears likewise from Scripture, compared with Scripture, that there will be *Degrees* both of *Rewards* and *Punishments* hereafter, in *Proportion* to the *Merits* and *Demerits* of Persons here; that so all *seeming Inequalities* will then be fully *adjusted*, and every Account equitably ballanced, at the great Day of Retribution.

This being premised, and fixed as a general and standing Rule of God's Dealings with Men, I now proceed to observe in particular,

2. That, as to the Instance of the *Labourers* in the Parable, who were not rewarded in *Proportion* to their *Respective Services*, all We ought to conclude from it is This; that the *Length* of their *Labours*, or the *Time* taken up therein, was *not* the *only Thing* to be considered: There were *other Circumstances* to be taken into Account, in Order to a due and just *Proportion* in the *Retribution*. Perhaps, Those who wrought but a *few Hours*, or but *one Hour*, were as *willing* to work, as Others could be; only They had not the good Fortune to be hired so soon. Perhaps They might be in *more Pain* and *Uneasiness* for *Want* of Work, and might really suffer more Trouble on that Account, than Others found in their *Day's Labour*. Perhaps, after They were hired, They might work with *ten times* the *Diligence* and Application that the Others did. When an all-wise God appoints the Work, and is to distribute the Wages, every minute Circumstance shall be exactly weighed and considered. It is not with Him, as with an earthly Master, so much Service, so much Wages; neither is it computed by the *Time* spent in the mere *outward Service*: Men thus deal with One Another; because They can look no farther than to the *outward Work*; and because They propose only to have the Work done, for the supplying their own Occasions: But a wise and good God knows and considers *all Circumstances*; makes Allowances for necessary Lets, and Impediments; looks at the *Men*, as well as at the *Work*; at their *Tempers*, their *Dispositions*, their *Heartiness*, and *Forwardness*, in what They do; and, upon the Whole, states and ballances the Account with an unerring Exactness. And when He gives us no other Reason for what He does herein, but that it is his Pleasure to do so; That ought to satisfy Us, because his Pleasure is always founded upon great and weighty Considerations, though perhaps not known to Us, or such as We are not capable of knowing. That the

Case

Case is really so. We may learn from some plain Intimations given us by our Lord Himself. MARY, the Sister of MARTHA, is represented as a *late Penitent*, and One who had once been a very *sinful Woman*: But then, as her *Sins* had been extraordinary, so was her *Repentance* also: And accordingly our Lord said of Her, *Her Sins, which are many, are forgiven, because She loved much*. Here We may perceive, how the *Rule of Proportion* was exactly observed in that particular Instance: And We may justly infer from thence, that the same equitable Measures are as exactly followed in all God's Dealings whatsoever.

3. I may observe, that the same Thing is intimated, though more obscurely, in the *Parable itself*; and especially in the *Conclusion*, which makes Part of my Text in these Words, *Many are called, but Few are chosen*: Which is the Reason given, why sometimes the *Last shall be First, and the First Last*. It is an Advantage most certainly, to have been *first called*: It is an Advantage likewise to have been long listed into God's Service, and to have been, as it were, all the Day working: But still these Advantages, great as they are, may be more than compensated by a *super-abundant Zeal, Fervour, and Earnestness*, in Those who came later. By their *greater Activity* and *redoubled Speed*, They may outrun Those who had got the *Start* of Them. They may advance far in a little Time, by taking large Strides, and quick Paces; and so may get *beyond* Those who had *set out* long before Them, but had been *slack*, and *loitering*, in Comparison: And thus the *Last may be First, and the First Last*.

It is true, if the *First* had been exceeding active and diligent, and had made the *utmost Advantage* possible of their *early Setting out*; it would not then have been possible for Those who *came later* to *outrun* Them, or ever to *come up* to Them: But here lies the Case; there are but Few such Persons in Comparison: Few who have so much Zeal, Perseverance, and Assiduity in a long Course: *Many are called, but Few are chosen*. Many are called into God's Service, and Many also go on with it, faintly however, and languidly: But there are Few of that *eminent*, that heavenly, that *chosen* and godlike Stamp, as to *begin, continue, and persevere to the End*, with *due Fervour and Constancy*: And because Many grow *weary*, or *faint* upon the Progress, and do not make all the Use They might of the Advantages They have had by their *early Call*; therefore it is, that the *last Comers* will many times be preferred to the *First*, and so the *Last will be First* in God's Favour and Esteem, and the *First Last*; though *Both* shall be rewarded, not in Proportion

portion to the *Time spent* in the Service, but to their *respective Zeal and Earnestness* in it.

The Meaning of the Word *chosen*, in the Text, is much the same with *eminent*, or *extraordinary*; in such a Sense as St. PAUL is called a *chosen Vessel*, and Christians a *chosen Generation*: So We read of *chosen Men of Israel*, *choice Cedars*, *choice City*, *choice Gold*, *choicest Vines*, and the like; meaning *excellent* or *eminent* in their *respective Kinds*. There are but few such *chosen* or *eminent* Saints, in Comparison to the whole Number called: Yet They, and They only, shall be reckoned of the *first Rank* in God's Kingdom, whether They came in soon, or late. Such is the main Drift and *Purport* of the Parable, with the *Application* of it: Which being understood, it is so far from arguing any *Partiality*, or *unequal Dealing* on God's Part, in Respect of his Favours, that it is a full Proof of the *contrary*: For He is not led by any *outward Appearances*, or by any *Length of the Work*, merely considered as *outward Work*; but his Disposals are founded upon true and *real Virtue*, upon those *inward Qualities* and Ornaments of the Mind which make a *truly good Man*, and which distinguish God's best and most faithful Saints and Servants, from Others of much lower Attainments. But because the Parable carries in it *two several Views*; one respecting the Case of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* at *that Time*; the other respecting *All Persons* in *all Times* to come; I design now,

II.

To apply these *general Principles* to the *two particular Cases* now mentioned.

I. As to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, there was this remarkable Difference betwixt Them; that the *Jews* had the Advantage of a more *early Call*; They had been entered into Covenant *from the first*: While the *Gentiles* were not hired till the *third, sixth, ninth, or eleventh Hour*. The *first Invitation* in the *Morning*, is a plain Allusion to the *Case of the Jews*; as the *later Invitations* set forth the *Case of the Gentiles*. Every Circumstance almost of the Parable carries in it a tacit Allusion to *one or other* of Them.

The *Jews* had, for several Ages backwards, been taken into God's *Vineyard*, and admitted into *his Service*; while *other Nations* were suffered to walk in their *own Ways*: And even in the *Gospel Times*, when the *Gentiles* also were to be brought in; yet the *Gospel* was *first preached* to the *Jews*, both by our Lord Himself, and his Apostles after Him. The *Jews* had
constantly

constantly the *Preference* given Them; the *first Tenders* of Salvation were made to Them; and Nothing was so much as offered or proposed to the *Gentiles*, till the *Jews* had the *first Refusal* of the same Privileges. The *Jews* also were the Men who murmured and complained, as having *born the Heat and Burden of the Day*, and as expecting, on that Account, to be eminently distinguished above the *Gentiles* in the Nature, and Quality, and Greatness of the *final Rewards*. Even the best Kind of *Jews*, Those who accepted the *Gospel Terms*, and came into *Christ's Covenant*, yet had a Tincture of Pride and Partiality, on Account of their *special Prerogatives*; and were much offended that the *Gentiles*, who came in so late, should be admitted to as high, and as great Privileges as They. They thought Themselves hardly dealt with, and their Services not sufficiently considered, when the *Gentiles* were taken in, and set upon the Level with Them. The Parable therefore, thus far, exactly answers to the *Case of the Jews at that Time*.

We may observe further, that the *Gentiles* of that Time, as They came in late, so the principal Reason was, that no One had hired Them: As soon as ever They had a Call, They came in with all Readiness and Alacrity. They are represented in the New Testament, as crowding in with eager and impatient Zeal, pressing into the Kingdom of Heaven with Violence, and, as it were, taking it by Force. They esteemed it as a very valuable Favour to be admitted, and were exceeding thankful for it. In these Respects They shewed Themselves much superior to the Generality of the *Jews*, and were therefore much more acceptable in God's Sight; and so the Last became First, and the First Last, in God's Favour and Esteem, on Account of their different Tempers, Dispositions, and Qualities. The *Jews* were first called; but then They claimed it as their Right, and were too assuming: While the *Gentiles* were more modest, humble, and thankful. The *Jews* accepted the Call, Many of Them; but still They murmured and complained, and were envious at the Favour shewn to Others: While the *Gentiles* were kindly and charitably disposed towards All, and were very willing to unite with the *Jews*, and to work together with Them for the common Salvation. This was what our Lord well saw; and therefore principally designed the Parable as a lively Representation of what was then doing; partly, to curb the Pride, Partiality, and Ill-Nature of the *Jews*; and partly, to encourage and recommend the contrary Qualities and Dispositions of the *Gentiles*.

The Parable however, besides its first Intention, might have a secondary View and Respect to All Christians in After-Times.

2. And

21. And therefore I come now, so to apply it. God is the *Supreme Householder*; his *Vineyard* is the *Christian Church*; the *Labourers* are, as *Many* as have been admitted into his *Church* by *Christian Baptism*; the *Service*, is the *Work of Faith and Charity*; and the *Reward* offered, is *eternal Happiness*.

It is our *Honour and Privilege*, that We have been called at the *first Hour*, in the *Morning* of our *Lives*, from our *early Infancy*: It concerns Us therefore to enquire, whether We have made the *right Use* and *Improvement* of our *early Call*; or whether We have not *loitered* a great Part of our *Time*, and done the *Work of the Lord slothfully*, and *negligently*.

Besides our *first and principal Call*, in our *Baptism*, We have had *repeated Invitations* since; at the *third, sixth, or ninth Hours*, through every *Stage* of our *Lives*, as We live daily under the *Gospel-Ministry*, and under the benign Influence of *God's holy Ordinances*. If We have made a *right Use* of these *Advantages*, and continue so to do, no *Labourer* who comes later in, can ever be able to go beyond Us, or even to come up to Us: But if We have been *slack and negligent*, our *early Call*, and those *repeated Offers* of *Salvation*, will turn to a *sad Account*, and will increase our *Damnation*. Such as have fewer *Calls*, or have come in but at the *eleventh Hour*, if *more sincere* and *heartly* in their *Profession* than We, will be *preferred* before Us, and be in a much better Condition than We.

From *God's* receiving Those who came in late, at the *Eleventh Hour*, we may learn this; that true *Repentance* at any *Hour* may however be acceptable; it is never too late to amend; or it is always the best Thing We can do: Not that the *Parable* gives any *Encouragement* for putting off our *Repentance* from *Day to Day*: For we are None of us in the *Case* of Those who had *never been hired*, or had *never had any Call*: We have been *hired*, or listed into *God's Service* from the *Time* of our *Baptism*, as before *hired*, and have had *repeated Calls and Invitations* all our *Lives long*. We ought to have been labouring the *whole Time*, and to have borne the *Heat and Burden of the Day*: But if we have not done so; it is better, however, to begin to work at the *Eleventh Hour*, than never to begin at all: And *God* may accept it even then, making *merciful Allowances* for what is past, if *Care* be taken to do it with *Sincerity and Zeal*, and with *proportionable Sorrow and Contrition* for the *Time mis-spent* in *Vanity*: And such late *Repentance* will undoubtedly be the more acceptable, if begun while a *Man* is in *Health and Strength*, before the *Approaches* of *Death*,

Death, or the Languors of a sick Bed. It is not *dying well*, but it is *living well* which the Gospel requires of us. It is therefore dangerous to presume upon what some call a *Death-bed Repentance*, of which it is very hard to know, whether it be really *Repentance* or not.

The Result of what hath been said comes to This: That it concerns us All duly to *examine* and *consider* what *Privileges* and *Mercies* We have *already received* at God's Hands; how *many Calls* have been sent us, how *many Offers* have been made us, and *what Use* we have turned them to. According as we have been *more*, or *less diligent* in our Christian Calling, so will our *Reward* be in *Proportion* to our *Zeal* on one hand, or our *Negligence* on the other; so will our final Estate hereafter be the *more happy*, or the *more miserable*. We ought always to be labouring in God's Vineyard, and doing the best we can to serve and please him: The sooner we begin, the more we shall be able to improve, and grow in all Virtue and Godliness; which, as it will raise our Hope and Confidence in God's Promises, so will it also help to increase our Rewards. No Labour of this Kind can be in vain; every the least Addition to it, or Increase of it will turn to Account. It is a good Point gained, to advance so far as to be secure against *Condemnation* in Hell-Fire: But if any Man can advance farther, there are *infinite Degrees of Glory* in Heaven, and the higher he rises, so much the better will it be for Him to all Eternity.

We have seen then what Room there is left, and what Encouragement is given for *improving*, and growing daily and hourly in every good Word and Work. Let it therefore be our constant Endeavour so to do; and God of his Mercy send us his Assistance both to enable, and incite us to a careful Performance.

END OF VOLUME I

